THE TIMES

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THE MURDER THAT SHOOK THE MET
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SEAN PENN Voyage into dark page 39

ANDREA BARRETT Voyage of discovery page 22

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Campaign to banish racism

Law to change to bring 'new era' for Britain

BY PHILIP WEBSTER, POLITICAL EDITOR, RICHARD FORD AND STEWART TENDLER

RADICAL changes in the law in an attempt to eradicate racism from public life in Britain were announced yesterday by the Government as the report on the Stephen Lawrence case was published.

Tony Blair last night promised the most far-reaching reform of race relations laws in 30 years and a concerted drive to end the "canteen culture" in Britain's police forces.

Speaking after Sir Paul Condon, the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, admitted the shame of his force over the murder investigation, the Prime Minister gave him his personal backing. He said he hoped the Lawrences would work with the police and the Government for change.

In the most scathing report on policing since the Second World War, Sir William Macpherson accused the Metropolitan Police of "racism, professional incompetence and bad leadership". He added that 18 years after the Scarman report into policing and community relations, many of its lessons have not been learned or properly implemented.

As the Government promised a new drive to combat racism in every workplace, black groups greeted the report and the Government's response cautiously.

Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, also stood by Sir Paul who is to resist calls to resign and complete the remaining ten months of his seven-year term to drive forward anti-racist policies.

Mr Straw foreshadowed the widening of the Race Relations Act to cover civil servants, hospital and social workers, immigration officers and the police. He hoped the report would be a "watershed" in British attitudes to racism and told a sombre House of Commons that it must act as a "catalyst for permanent and irrevocable change, not just across our public services but across the whole of society".

With Neville and Doreen Lawrence, Stephen's parents, looking on from a special gallery, he declared that the report was a testament to them and must become a lasting testament to their son.

The 335-page report catalogued the inadequacies of the investigation which meant the killers of the A-level student have never been brought to justice. The investigation was flawed, from the arrival of officers on the scene of the stabbing in April 1993 at a bus-stop in southeast London, to the top of the organisation.

First aid at the scene was inadequate and officers were badly organised in the first hours. Stephen's parents were patronised and ignored by detectives. Other senior officers were badly-informed about the law and in one case "not up to his job". Identity parades which might have provided evidence were botched and searches of the suspects' houses were inadequate.

Mr Straw said that he and Sir Paul accepted the central finding that the Metroplitan Police is infected by "institutional" racism.

The other main measures outlined by the Home Secretary were:

☐ An immediate inspection of the Metropolitan Police by the Inspectorate of Constabulary, including an examination of unsolved murders.

☐ Orders to compel all police forces to set clear objectives and performance standards to deal with racist crime.

☐ New targets for the recruitment, retention and promotion of ethnic minority police and civilian staff to ensure that every force reflects the diversity of the community it serves.

☐ A report next week by the Inspectorate of Constabulary looking at police-community relations across the country.

☐ Extension of the Race Relations Act to cover all the public services. The Commission for Racial Equality will investigate claims of discrimination within every policy force and other public services.

Mr Blair said the report — which delivered a scathing verdict on the police handling of the case — must mark the beginning of a "new era in race relations".

He said: "We should confront as a nation honestly the racism that still exists within our society. We should find within ourselves the will to overcome it. Today all the right words have been said but later the right things must be done." Racism was a "waste of talent and ability and the contribution that could be made to Britain. It is something that diminishes the whole of our society".

He said the country had to show that same courage and determination the Lawrences showed in the six-year fight to

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"I failed to get into the police on account of my flat feet"

Neville and Doreen Lawrence with their family and legal team at a press conference after the publication of the report which she said had only "scratched the surface"

Mother still bitter and angry

BY MICHAEL HARVEY

FOR Neville and Doreen Lawrence, the six years since their son's murder have been filled with grief and pain as they have campaigned to bring his killers to justice. But yesterday they said nothing had changed.

"Black people are still dying on the streets and in the back of police vans," Mrs Lawrence said.

"My feelings about the future remain the same as it was when my son was murdered. Black youngsters will never be safe on the streets. The police on the ground are the same as they were when my son was killed."

Bitter and angry still, she said the inquiry report had only scratched the surface.

"I was looking forward to the report, thinking that it would be a watershed for centuries to come but instead it has only scratched the surface and has not gone to the heart of the problem. Nonetheless, this report represents an opportunity not to be missed by this society as a whole. It is a time for change."

Speaking at a press conference at the Home Office in London alongside her husband Mrs Lawrence continued: "If those who had murdered my son had been better educated in knowing who had helped to build the society we live in, they would have realised that everyone in this country, and black people, played a part in it. We have earned our place to live and not to have our children killed."

She told Sir Paul Condon that he did not have the support of the black community.

"When one of your children has been brutally murdered you are looking for those with power to do something about it. My son was stabbed and left to bleed to death on the night of 22 April 1993 while police officers looked on.

"They treated the affair as a gang war and from that moment on they acted in a manner that can only be described as white masters during slavery.

"Since Sir Paul Condon took over the role as Commissioner he has spent a lot of time defending his officers while those he was employed to protect were vulnerable and at the mercy of the racist officers who walked the streets in the name of the law.

"The report said that there was nothing in the finding that suggested or implied that all police officers are racist, even though they believe that institutional racism was apparent in a number of areas the police handled of the case.

"It seems that we had all the officers who were racist handling our case.

"No wonder that we are in the position we are today that no one is serving time for the murder of my son."

She said institutional racism was so ingrained that it was hard to see how it would be eradicated from the police.

She questioned the retention of stop and search powers and called for monitoring of the recruitment of black and ethnic minority officers.

She welcomed the emphasis on education in the inquiry report, adding: "They see the need to amend the National Curriculum. I truly believe in education as gaining and imparting knowledge.

"Our history, our background is what separates us."

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Fresh avalanche hampers rescue

BY CLAUDIA JOSEPH

THE race to rescue victims trapped in the Austrian ski resort of Galtür was hampered yesterday when another avalanche hit a neighbouring village, destroying four houses and burying six people alive.

Yesterday's avalanche, 45ft high and 600ft wide, tore down at speeds of 180mph through Mathon, about a mile away from Galtür where 16 bodies have been recovered from Tuesday's avalanche. The search for another 30 people who are missing was suspended as darkness set in. Rescuers fear the death toll will surpass the 56 lives lost in the worst alpine disaster of 1954 at Blons, in the neighbouring Vararlberg province.

Thousands of tourists, trapped by unpassable roads, were clamouring to leave the resort before it was cut off again by bad weather, forecast for the weekend. As the main road into Galtür remained blocked, tourists were being airlifted to Landeck, at the bottom of the Paznaun Valley, 25 miles away. Tourists also remained trapped in Lech, Zurs and Stuben.

As the snowfall took its toll, Austrian organisers cancelled the cross-country skiing world championships after an avalanche above Ramsau.

In Switzerland rescuers recovered two more bodies of victims of Sunday's avalanche in Evolene in Valais canton. The body of a farmer was discovered in central Uri canton.

In France, a 26-year-old male hiker, missing for four days in the Pyrenees, died in hospital; a 33-year-old woman discovered with him was recovering from hypothermia.

Despite the appalling weather conditions, British holiday companies are still sending tourists to skiing resorts. Ingham's, Britain's biggest independent ski tour operator, is flying 6,000 tourists to European resorts this weekend.

Alps' revenge, page 5

Derek Nimmo, the perfect English gentleman, dies

BY JOANNA BALE

THE comedy actor Derek Nimmo, a veteran of Radio 4 shows such as *Just a Minute*, died yesterday aged 68.

He had been in hospital since falling at his home in Kensington in December and had spent several weeks in a coma following surgery to remove a blood clot from his brain. After slowly regaining consciousness, he was reported to be making good progress but died shortly after contracting pneumonia.

Barry Burnett, Mr Nimmo's agent of 12 years, said that the star's wife Pat, and children Tim, Amanda and Piers were at his bedside at the Chelsea and Westminster Hospital for his final hours. "Unfortunately Derek developed pneumonia over the last 24 hours and he died at about 5pm," said Mr Burnett.

Paying tribute to the man he described as "the perfect client" Mr Burnett said: "I think he epitomised the English gentlemen. He was a very versatile actor who everybody loved. He will be greatly missed."

Mr Nimmo made his name in the 1960s television adaptation of P G Wodehouse's Bertie Wooster and Blandings Castle novels, but he is best known for his television roles as comic clergymen in the sitcoms *All Gas and Gaiters*, *Oh Brother*, *Oh Father* and *Hell's Bells*.

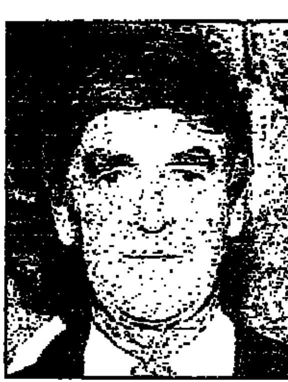
More recently he had been concentrating on his theatre company, which had made successful tours of the Far East.

Mr Nimmo was an unlikely star, with a stutter and an upper class air. Yet it was these very factors which made him one of the great comic character actors.

With his slightly bumbling, well-to-do mannerisms he was well-suited to *The World of Wooster* and *Blandings Castle*. However, while roles like these propelled him to stardom, it soon became clear that he was funniest not as a toff, but as a member of the clergy.

Ecclesiastical hits saw him play a range of clerics. In his time he was a curate, a monk, a Catholic priest, and a Dean.

Originally from Liverpool, Nimmo went into acting purely by chance. Smitten with the attractive girl who tried to sell him tickets for the amateur theatre production in which she was starring, he decided to sign up. Patricia became his wife of 43 years.



Derek Nimmo: favourite actor as a toff or clergyman

Obituary, page 27

The familiar surroundings that give a parable meaning

STEPHEN'S MEMORY

By MATTHEW PARRIS

Parables must be simple. When a parable is being born it is churlish to confuse the picture. So though, on a grey morning in a biting February wind, one bus stop on the A205 South Circular Road looks very like another, the knowledge that this is where Stephen was waiting six years ago, projects the Dickson Road bus shelter into an early frame of the modern Bayeux tapestry that relates our parable.

Soon it may be visited as a site of special historical interest. But in itself the place was without resonance. Eltham offers no grisly showcase for urban squalour: just suburban semis, pebble-dashed or mock-Tudor, neat lawns, box, hawthorn and variegated ivy. As in all the best parables, it is in the familiar that meaning is found.

One moral alone must be derived. Distractions are brushed aside. So we brush aside the stories of his attackers, the cruelties which will have made them cruel — and follow our tapestry to the next frame.

This is a small plaque, a simple In Memoriam in the road: the place in our parable where Stephen the Blameless fell. The wind had blown towards the GR postbox an imitation mauve rose to which a note was pinned. *"In the name of humanity I am so sory! [sic] Your mum and dad has [sic] touched us all ... your spirit is changing our society forever"*.

For all its naivety the note said more than, in an hour of pieties, the House of Commons said later. The Prime Minister adopted the voice he uses for tragic events. Jack Straw, probably the only man in the Cabinet capable of delivering yesterday's statement without sententiousness, kept the temperature down. He was introduced by Madam Speaker, who momentarily mistook his name, as 'Mr Secretary Short ... Straw.'

In a gallery more like a theatre-box Neville and Doreen Lawrence watched. Neville Lawrence's hair, black six years ago, is greying now: he looked the more bowed, his wife the more defiant. "Institutional racism consists of the collective failure of an organisation..." began Straw.

Behind him was a battalion of white faces called the Parliamentary Labour Party. But that is not part of the parable, in which politicians are doing their best.

The next frame is unfinished, the jury being still out on Sir Paul. The Metropolitan Police Commissioner confronted journalists at a Home Office Press Conference. With characteristic sensitivity the Home Office had a notice in their foyer advertising a security alert: *"Black special"*. Sir Paul stood his ground, it being hard to indict him for racism. This parable is about racism. All sides — from black militants to Home Office Sir Humphreys — would prefer to overlook the sheer bloody incompetence.

Doreen and Neville Lawrence filled the final frame yesterday. Doreen made the opening statement, lashing out against the police and hardly acknowledging efforts to reform. Some of her claims were personally offensive and quite unproven; but Mrs Lawrence is a wonderful person — nobody can doubt it — and if she is sometimes unfair, our parable must overlook that.

No observer moving as I did yesterday from Eltham to Westminster to Whitehall could fail to notice the mix of fact and fable. Feelings genuine and feigned, promises both earnest and hollow, memories as selective as every parable requires, were tangled together.

Imperceptibly history morphs into symbolism: GM history. Shades of grey fade; only black and white persists.

Condon tells of shame over failures

Police chief says he still hopes to arrest killers, Stewart Tendler reports

SIR Paul Condon, Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, yesterday publicly acknowledged the deep shame his force feels over the Stephen Lawrence investigation and announced he will stay until next year to lead reforms.

Sir Paul said: "We feel a sense of shame for the incompetence of the investigation and in our dealings with the family. We failed and we could and should have done better."

He was backed by the leadership of the Black Police Association, the leaders of the Police Federation representing junior ranks, and John Newing, Chief Constable of Derbyshire and president of the Association of Chief Police Officers.

Speaking minutes after Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, had given him his support in a Commons statement, Sir Paul said that the report by Sir William Macpherson of Cluny on the Stephen Lawrence investigations had shown that his officers had been cleared of racism, overt discrimination or corruption in their investigation of the murder.

He said that the allegations of corruption had proved to be "malicious, pernicious". He accepted that his force had been found guilty, "quite properly", of incompetence but he had decided against resignation because Sir William had not accused him of dishonesty or malpractice. He still hoped that before he leaves in January new police work will bring the racists who killed Stephen Lawrence to justice.

Sir Paul left open the possibility that some suspects could face a perjury charge over evidence at the inquiry, although Sir William ruled that out. The Commissioner said that there were investigations under way which he would not detail. Addressing a press conference in front of a poster proclaiming the Yard's new "Protest and Respect" campaign slogan, he said that he accepted the new definition of institutional racism in Sir William's report.

During the inquiry he had been concerned that the definitions being put forward were too broad brush and would tar his entire force. He had expressed his fears to Sir William after he gave evidence and asked for a workable definition that did not label all his officers. Sir Paul said the new definition, which applies to all public bodies and the wider community, was demanding but that the judge had addressed his concerns. It included unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and stereotyping.

> 'We failed in our dealings with the family and we could and should have done better'

Sir Paul said that it was a "demanding interpretation" but the police would lead the way in how the standard could be applied in practical approaches. He planned a threefold programme to deal with key issues raised by Sir William. The force has already introduced integrity testing to check whether officers display racism in dealing with the public. Undercover black and Asian officers have been used to test white officers under suspicion and telephone testing of victims has started to discover how they have been treated. Twelve tests have been carried out on officers, all of whom were found to behave properly. A survey of 100 victims had found two with complaints about the attitude of officers.

Sir Paul is sending an extra 180 detectives into London's murder squads. He pledged a "Rolls-Royce" approach to murder cases so that the Lawrence inquiry disasters would not be repeated. Police would no longer rely on ad hoc squads thrown together in the heat of the moment. No murder team would struggle with computers as the Lawrence team had, and in the 1990s new technology was at hand.

Sir Paul also plans to create a "rapid response force" from mobile units to seal off and preserve murder scenes in the key "golden hour" when police first arrive.

His third plan is a massive research study to see what Londoners think of the police. It will be similar to a controversial study more than ten years ago by the Policy Studies Institute, which first revealed the extent of the canteen culture.

Inspector Paul Wilson, head of the Black Police Assocation, said that the report gave a new clarity to the definition of institutional racism.

Inspector Glen Smyth, chairman of the London branch of the Police Federation, praised the fortitude of the Lawrence family and said that police could work with the definition of racism. The Lawrence investigation was not dogged by racism, but a catalogue of errors and mistakes. It was a bungled investigation.

SIMON BROOKE-WEBB



Sir Paul Condon, the embattled Metropolitan Police Commissioner, faces the media at Scotland Yard yesterday

Call for ban on racist language in the home sparks protests

BY FRANCES GIBB
LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

RACE LAWS

PROPOSALS to introduce the toughest race laws in the world by outlawing racist language even in the home were proposed in the Lawrence report yesterday.

It calls for a change to the law so that offences involving racist language or behaviour could be prosecuted even in the privacy of a home or private club. The change is one of a package of far-reaching proposed reforms. Other recommendations include a review of the so-called "double jeopardy" rule by which people cannot be prosecuted twice for the same crime.

Yesterday Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, said he would ask the Law Commission to review the rule to see if the Court of Appeal should have the power to permit prosecution after an acquittal where fresh, viable evidence is presented. His response to a wide range of other possible changes will be given later. These include granting legal aid for bereaved families at inquests and reviewing bail conditions to prevent the intimidation of witnesses.

The proposal on racist language in the home stems from the police surveillance video that showed four of the youths (Jamie Acourt was in custody) acting out stabbing and using abusive racial language. It would also extend to offences involving the possession of offensive weapons.

If the law were to be changed, it would allow the video to be used as evidence to prosecute the youths, even though they were in their own home. But the idea — along with that on diluting the "double jeopardy rule" — ran into immediate opposition from civil liberties lawyers and experts yesterday.

Chris Boothman, legal director for the Commission for Racial Equality, said that the proposal would need full discussion. "Some aspects appeal — such as being able to deal with the Bernard Manning type of situation in a private club.

"But our concern is that this goes too far if it extends to someone sitting at home just talking to another member of their family."

Geoffrey Bindman, solicitor and legal adviser to the Commission, said he would be "unhappy" about a law that could even be a breach of the Human Rights Act protections for freedom of expression. To his knowledge, it would be far tougher than anything elsewhere. In the United States, freedom of speech was fiercely protected by the First Amendment, he said.

"What this would mean is removing exclusion currently in the Public Order Act 1986, which prevents prosecutions for incitement to racial hatred over what takes place in a private home, if it cannot be heard outside." The act creates an offence of using threatening, abusive and insulting words or behaviour with the intention of stirring up racial hatred, he said.

It is a defence at present to show the words were used inside a dwelling and that the person had no reason to believe they could be heard. "It would not be right to penalise someone for what they say privately in their own home," said Mr Bindman. "However, if they knew or believed they were being bugged or overheard, that is another matter — because it then becomes a public place."

John Wadham, director of Liberty, the human rights group, also strongly condemned the idea. He said: "The whole point of the current law against the use of racist language is that it is aimed at preventing incitement to racial hatred. So it is the effect of the language that is important.

"The fact that people use it; in their home may be offensive but it should not be a criminal offence because it affects noone else."

Kamlesh Bahl, deputy vice-president of the Law Society, said: "It is a question of finding the right balance between tackling racist behaviour and freedom of expression."

Changes to dilute the fundamental principle that a person cannot be tried twice for the same crime would also be resisted.

MPs and lawyers yesterday warned that that changes could lead to people facing the endless threat of being pursued by the prosecution authorities.

Norman Fowler, the Shadow Home Secretary, urged caution, saying it was "by no means clear" that a change of that kind would have helped in the Stephen Lawrence case. He said there were too many examples of the Government's "legislating in anger and living to regret it".

Lincoln Crawford, QC, chairman of the Bar Council race relations committee, said: "We must not allow ourselves to fall into a situation where the state can endlessly prosecute unpopular defendants until it gets the result it is after."

Tougher courts call

THE Director of Public Prosecutions last night urged courts to reflect a crime's racial element with tougher sentences (Frances Gibb writes).

David Calvert-Smith, QC, also pledged a new policy of communication with crime victims and their families if prosecutions were dropped. He told *The Times* that courts had failed to increase sentences to reflect a racial element. "In only 22 per cent of cases where we had highlighted a racial element did courts indicate that the sentence had been increased." Last autumn they had been placed under a statutory duty to up sentences for such crimes.

Mr Calvert-Smith accepted that more could have been done to contact the Lawrence family after the decision not to prosecute.

Police 'were jeered at and abused'

BY ADAM FRESCQ

ONE of the three senior officers who led the initial investigation into the murder of Stephen Lawrence said yesterday that he and his colleagues were treated "worse than criminals" during the inquiry.

Detective Chief Superintendent Bill Ilsley, Detective Supt Ian Crampton and Det Supt Brian Weedon, all of whom have retired, are highly critical of the public inquiry.

All three deny the inquiry suggestions that their failure to bring the five suspects to justice was marred by racism, corruption or sheer incompetence. However, they do admit mistakes were made.

Mr Ilsley, who was in charge of the first investigation, and Mr Crampton described the inquiry as a "public witchhunt" that could happen to any officer.

Mr Ilsley, who was 32-years with the Metropolitan Police, said: "From the time we walked in we were abused, jeered at, laughed at — and I felt the chairman allowed (it to) happen. It would not have happened in any court trial.

"I was trying to be fair and helpful because I honestly believed at that time that the public inquiry was going to be a meaningful inquiry. But it did not happen that way. It was almost like a public execution."

All three officers, who spoke to the *Police Review* magazine, say they knew the Lawrences were grieving but believe that the inquiry was set up in part to satisfy the couple to ensure they got what

THE INQUIRY

they wanted at the hearing. Mr Crampton, the senior investigating officer for the first 72 hours after the killing, added: "We went along to what we were told was going to be an inquisitorial hearing. But it was totally adversarial and we were placed in the dock, and in my view, Mr Mansfield ran the show. It was almost as if we were there for them just to criticise."

All three deny they were responsible for a catalogue of errors which contributed to the suspects not being convicted.

Mr Ilsley said that he put more resources into the investigation than any other "because of its delicate nature, its publicity and because it was a racist murder".

All three have been criticised for failing to get on with the Lawrence family. But they claim that from day one they were not dealing with a normal family liaison situation.

Mr Ilsley said that any contact with the family was in the presence of their solicitor, Imran Khan. He said the first thing the Mr Khan said was that if it had been a white murder and black youths were the suspects they would have already been arrested.

"I felt very upset about that for the simple reason that not only was it untrue but that the family were listening to this... Obviously it must have affected their attitude towards me," Mr Ilsley told the magazine, published tomorrow.

Mr Crampton was criticised for not arresting the five suspects over the first weekend but he says they did not have strong enough evidence.

Campaign to banish racism

Continued from page 1

discover why Stephen's murderers were never brought to justice. He spoke after talking to them at 10 Downing Street.

Although Britain was admired for its race relations record, clearly not enough had been done and a programme of change would be needed to make Britain "a beacon to the world" on race equality.

Mr Straw also announced that he was asking the Law Commission to look at the controversial report proposal to end the "double jeopardy" rule which prevents a suspect being prosecuted for the same crime twice.

Mr Straw said the report had revealed "some fundamental truths about the nature of our society" including some that were uncomfortable. "We would be deluding ourselves if we believed that the issues thrown up by this inquiry affect only the police."

Mr Straw praised Sir Paul's work since he took over as Commissioner six years ago, saying that he had given strong leadership, brought crime figures down and tackled corruption with vigour.

He said: "I have asked Sir Paul to continue to lead the Metropolitan Police to deliver the programme of work which is now required. He has agreed. He will use the remaining ten months of his office to take that work forward, including the agenda set by this report. I will be supporting him and his successor."

The Home Secretary said any long-established white-dominated organisation was liable to have procedures and practices that tended to exclude or disadvantage non-white people. "The police service in this respect is little different from other parts of the criminal justice system, or from government departments including the Home Office and many other institutions," Mr Straw said.

Mr Blair said the report was a "very important moment in the life of our country".

'Nothing will change on these streets'

By Daniel McGrory

SCHOOL was almost over for the day on April 22, 1993 when Stephen Lawrence stopped one of his teachers, Bob Henderson, and asked advice about how best to present some artwork he was particularly proud of.

The two chatted for a while, and the last thing Mr Henderson remembers was Stephen, courteous and enthusiastic as ever, promising to talk to him again about his work as he *rushed off to meet friends.*

Eight hours later, and three miles away, Stephen Lawrence lay bleeding to death on the street.

His teachers, friends and all those who live, work and shop along that route where Stephen spent his last hours did not need six years of police investigations and a public inquiry to tell them why he died.

Mr Henderson said: "The acceptable face of British *youth had* the tragic *misfortune* to run into the worst."

At the Blackheath Bluecoat School there are reminders of Stephen everywhere. Just inside the main gates a cherry blossom tree was beginning to flower over the simple memorial plaque. In the entrance hall hangs a brightly coloured painting of Bluecoats by one of his school friends that is dominated by Stephen's smile.

Amy Bickley, the head teacher, said: "Youngsters don't have to be told there is racism outside those school gates. They meet it every day and we have the police here to talk about issues that worry them like stop and search."

At lunchtime some sixth formers walked across the bridge running over the motorway to the Blackwell Tunnel to visit a nearby chip shop, just as Stephen had done that April afternoon.

Two black youths, who were about the same age as Stephen, were playing video games in the snack bar yesterday, *just as he had with his* best friend, Duwayne Brooks.

TEACHERS

Neither wanted to be named because they say the police know them. "There will be a lot of big talk now from politicians about stopping racism in the police but nothing will change on the streets around here. If you're black, you can't be a *victim*."

Racist graffiti is daubed on a shopfront close to where Stephen and his friend caught a bus after school for the 15-minute journey to Lewisham High Street.

Shoppers in Lewisham barely glanced at the newspaper placards yesterday. The findings of a former High Court judge can tell them nothing about living in this corner of southeast London that they do not already know. The popular view is that this inquiry can only reinforce existing prejudice, not change it.

> 'Stephen is one of dozens. You heard about him because he died, but what about the others?'

Marie Lincoln was born in the Caribbean but has lived in the area for 18 years. She said: "Stephen is just one of dozens of boys in this town attacked because of the colour of his skin. You heard about him because he died, but what about the others. Some report won't change our life here."

William Maloney has sold newspapers on the same corner for 13 years and dismisses the idea that attitudes have changed since Stephen's murder. "The police have been messing around so long on *this Lawrence affair they have* been afraid to take on the criminals from both sides who have turned this place into a muggers' paradise," he said.

Many of those browsing in the cut-price clothes shop windows, where Stephen spent his *last afternoon, tell of rumours* of how he must have been on the fringes of crime or provoked the fight that killed him. They recognise this is an *unfashionable* view so prefer not to give their names.

All the same they pass on "the local intelligence" that one of the black teenagers was somehow involved in drugs and had wandered on to the wrong patch. There is gossip about house break-ins and provocative taunts. It doesn't matter that there is no evidence for any of these allegations. They admit it makes them feel better to believe the motive was *other than just the colour of* Stephen's skin.

From Lewisham Stephen took another bus to Plumstead to see an uncle and after playing computer games with Duwayne both rushed off to be home in time for the curfew imposed by their parents.

In Dunkery Road where they caught the 126 bus to Eltham High Street those waiting in the biting cold at the bus stop thought their area had *been unfairly portrayed* because of Stephen's death.

Martin Lawrence, 21, said: "This is not as violent as many other parts of south London but our reputation is that we are all racist murderers ... just because white people say something about a black it does not make them racist."

The art deco Coronet cinema on the roundabout where Stephen and Duwayne debated which route they should take home has seen better days.

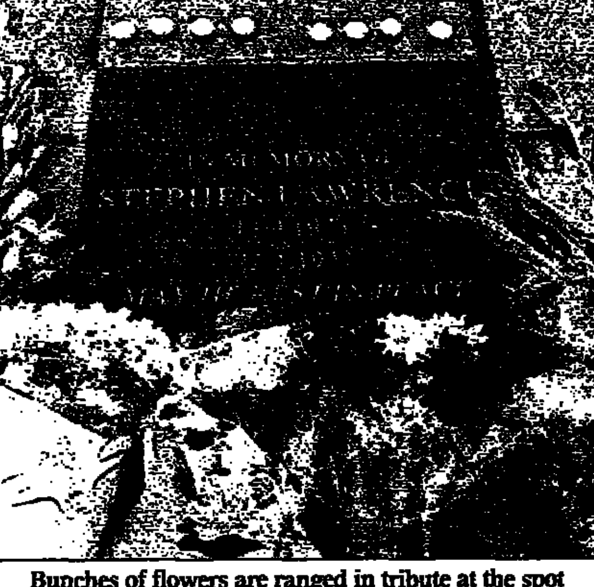
The area likes to call itself the Millennium Borough because of the nearby Dome but residents such as Hannah Embury believe it is forever blighted because of the Lawrence murder.

The semi-detached terraces with their pebble-dash or mock Tudor fronts are well maintained but Mrs Embury said: "People do feel ashamed. You can't walk along this road without thinking of that poor lad."

At the bus stop where he was attacked two men argued about whether the gang meant to kill Stephen or just frighten him.

It was clear where Stephen died, a hundred yards away on the opposite pavement, as camera crews loitered around the memorial plaque. Fresh bunches of flowers had been appearing since early morning along with a misspelt poem from three children.

Merle Stayne, who used to *teach in the area, tried in vain* to light candles at the windswept spot. "They could have saved all that money and heartache on this report and just asked the people who have to live with racism every day," she said.



Bunches of flowers are ranged in tribute at the spot where Stephen Lawrence was stabbed and died

Neil Acourt, left, and his brother Jamie yesterday. A sign outside their house warns callers that, because of a dog, they enter at their own risk

Community closes ranks against callers

By Adrian Lee

THE black dustbin liners taped over the iron gates of the mock Tudor house were a sign that years of evasion and silence would not be broken by the publication of the Stephen Lawrence inquiry.

Like his four friends, who were the main suspects for the racist murder, David Norris had gone to ground yesterday. Security lights, a burglar alarm and an intercom system ensured that the 21-year-old and *his mother*, Theresa, remained undisturbed.

According to their neighbours, who were prepared to say little else, the crude screen to block prying eyes and camera lenses was a recent touch at the five-bedroom house in a private road in Chislehurst, *southeast London.*

The others, whose homes are less imposing, found different ways of avoiding awkward questions. None wanted to present a public face after the report dammed them as the type of men who were capable of committing such a brutal murder.

At the council house in Greenwich, where Neil Acourt, 22, and his brother Jamie, 21, live with their mother *Pat*, a light shone above the front door but knocks went unanswered. Two pot plants had been strategically placed to block the path and a sign warned callers that because of a dog, they entered at their own risk. A punchbag hung in the garden.

The Acourts — in the words of Sir William Macpherson of Cluny — fancied themselves as gang leaders, and referred to themselves as "the Krays".

"I don't know nothing about them," said the young woman next door. The elderly widower on the other side was only slightly more forthcoming, but equally reluctant to give his name.

THE SUSPECTS

"I've been in the Army, but sometimes you just keep your mouth shut, don't you? I've got my view but it's not worth it, is it?" He had had no trouble with the brothers and his only worry was reprisals from "black Muslims".

At Gary Dobson's house, on *the Progress Estate, which is* within walking distance of the bus stop where Stephen Lawrence was stabbed, every curtain was drawn. Many of the neighbours are elderly and yesterday left no doubt about where their sympathies lay.

"I have no wish to discuss it," *said one woman.* "As far as I am concerned, they (the Dobsons) are very nice people." She blamed the media for all the fuss.



Dustbin liners cover the gates of David Norris's home

In Eltham High Street, where the five are said to frequent local pubs, one of the Acourt brothers was seen yesterday morning buying a *newspaper. Witnesses said he* appeared to be laughing at the headline "Into Hell" which the tabloids had used to describe the Brook Estate where he and his brother grew up.

At Luke Knight's home in New Eltham, his mother Pam emerged briefly to say she *had nothing to say. The mod*ern property is the only one in the street to have an intercom system. For once, the neighbours Sidney and Gill Payne *were only too willing to talk.*

Mrs Payne, a care assistant, said: "Luke is a very quiet, polite boy. He's not at all like it was portrayed in the papers. He is not flash, he does not wear lary [loud] clothes. They are a very close family. We are lucky to have such quiet neighbours. We don't discuss what happened with them. It is nothing to do with us."

Her husband, 63, who has lived in Eltham for 20 years, *said: "He is no trouble at all. I* don't really believe all this racist stuff. I think it was just boys, a gang fight." He was disappointed that Eltham had been portrayed as a racist community, populated almost entirely by white people. "There are a few coloureds around *here," he said, pointing across* the road. "I think there used to be one over there."

Officers on beat reject racist tag

By Russell Jenkins

POLICE VIEW

BEAT officers going on duty in Manchester last night were resigned and dismissive of the Macpherson report, fearing that they would be stuck with the label of racism.

They alsosaid that it may have the effect of widening the gap between officers doing a tough job on the streets, the politicians and *their own force leadership.*

One officer on duty said: "It is a hard battle as it is, and what has happened in Westminster isn't going to make it any easier. If you stop a car driven by a black person, you are immediately accused of being a racist. It is the first line of attack. This is going to give them more ammunition."

An officer from a neighbouring force said: "Ordinary cops are not *racist, just* ordinary people doing a pretty shitty job as best they can. I don't think Sir Paul Condon was making much sense because he is so far away from real police work."

Officers in Greater Manchester Police have complained that the admission in October by their Chief Constable, David Wilmot, *that the force is institutionally racist* has made policing black communities more difficult. Some are *hopeful that* the report's more elaborate definition, setting it in a wider context which talks about unwitting behaviour, will absolve them of the charge they are individually racist.

Mike Huby, Police Federation chairman, said: "I think we can live with this definition ... It does not mean every police officer is a racist. I am hoping we try to move forward and foster *better relations with the* black community."

Cheshire Constabulary has been criticised for recruiting fewer officers from the ethnic minorities than its counterparts. Alan Gill, a retired custody sergeant, left recently after 28 years' serv*ice and is studying for a law* degree at Keele University.

He is fearful that the report's subtle definition of institutional racism will lose any meaning as it filters down to the daily routine of policing, adding: "I think a lot of policemen will be very hurt. Ordinary coppers don't feel themselves to be racist, but this report is saying they are. And I don't *think that is fair.*"

Force condemned as 'sinking ship'

By Helen Rumbelow

BLACK REACTION

THEY expected much of Jack Straw's speech but watched in angry silence — a resentment born of years of being disappointed at the hands of Government and police.

About 20 black people from London's Notting Hill — one of the first ports of call for West Indian immigrants in the 1950s — gathered at a lottery-funded community arts centre to watch the Home Secretary's performance on a vast television screen. It was important they said, to witness even such a small victory for race relations even though the substance left them in no mood for *celebration.*

How, they asked, did Mr Straw have the gall not to sack Sir Paul Condon?

"To me it's a bit of a joke," said Lisa Barnes, trustee of the Tabernacle Trust. "It's like saying that the captain of the Titanic had nothing to do with the sinking ship — and this is one hell of a sinking ship."

Mr Straw's praise of the force in the same speech as praising the Lawrence family was a bitter irony, Ms Barnes said. "It'll take a lot more than a few nice words and commendations to the family to put *this right. It has been endemic* for a long time.

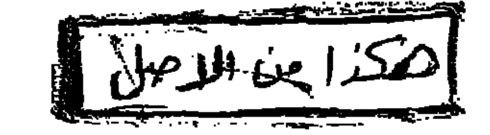
"He said, 'we commend the family,' but what were they doing the whole time since Stephen died? So little that the police might as well have colluded, might as well have been part of the gang that killed him."

Basil Jarvis, 52, a senior neighbourhood worker, said that Sir Paul was not suitable for the post after his involvement in the Frank Critchlow affair. In 1988 Sir Paul was Deputy Assistant Commissioner for the Metropolitan Police with responsibility for the Notting Hill area when Mr Critchlow, 68, was arrested and accused of supplying heroin.

He was cleared of supplying *drugs by a jury a year* later. Widespread anger in the Notting Hill area about his treatment at the hands of the police was vindicated when he accepted £50,000 from the force in 1992 after he took a High Court action for alleged false imprisonment, battery and malicious prosecution.

"Why does it take a murder and incompetence for them to change things," said Mr Jarvis. "It was blatantly in front of them and they did nothing."

After the speech was over the crowd dispersed to swap *tales of racist abuse from the* police. "If those on top had been dealing with it, it wouldn't have filtered down to the bullies on the street," said Clive Phillip, 57.



Cook under fire over arms to Africa leak

By Roland Watson, political correspondent

ROBIN COOK'S woes over the arms-to-Africa affair deepened last night as he faced the prospect of a parliamentary inquiry into his role in the leaking of a Commons report highly critical of the Foreign Office.

Betty Boothroyd, the Speaker, is also to rule on whether ministers who receive leaked documents and fail to return them are in breach of parliamentary rules.

Mr Cook was forced to explain himself to the Commons yesterday after the surprise resignation from the Foreign Affairs Select Committee of Ernie Ross, the Labour MP for Dundee West. Mr Ross admitted leaking a draft copy of the committee's highly critical report to the Foreign Secretary, and passing its key recommendations to Andrew Hood, Mr Cook's special adviser.

Mr Cook said he was "confident" that he had not broken House of Commons rules. However, the Tories made clear that they intend to pursue the issue and draw out further the Sierra Leone episode that has dogged the Mr Cook for much of his tenure in the Foreign Office.

During the Commons exchanges after Mr Cook's statement, Conservative MPs repeatedly accused the Foreign Secretary of acting improperly. Sir John Stanley, MP for Tonbridge and Malling and a Tory member of the committee, said: "A minister who accepts and reads a document leaked personally to him by a member of a select committee makes himself complicit in the leak."

A report on the leak will now be prepared by the select committee, which will automatically go to the Standards and Privileges Select Committee, the MPs' disciplinary watchdog. That committee will then conduct its own inquiry, and MPs on the cross-party body would almost certainly want to hear from Mr Cook himself.

Further details of the leak emerged yesterday, with Mr Cook revealing that it had been faxed to the Foreign Office. Although officials refused to disclose in which office it had arrived, it was assumed it had gone to his private office.

Mr Cook, clearly irritated by the Tory questioning, said he discussed it with his Permanent Secretary, Sir John Kerr, but did not disclose it to No 10.

However, he did discuss its contents with Tony Lloyd, the Foreign Office Minister, and other officials, including his advisers. The Tories also kept up their fire on Mr Lloyd himself, who last week suggested in a Commons written reply that no one in the Foreign Office had seen the report before its publication date.

Mr Cook insisted that his reply, to a question which included a reference to the serial number of the final report, was technically correct.

However, Sir George Young, the Shadow leader of the House, said Mr Lloyd had given the House the wrong impression. If the House had been "knowingly misinformed", Mr Lloyd should "immediately resign".

Mr Cook faced further Tory charges that he misled the House when he said Mr Ross had not tabled any amendments to the draft report. The amendment, which was not accepted, removed words in one of the committee's conclusions which arguably sharpen the criticism of officials.

A Tory spokesman said: "Robin Cook has either again misled the public and MPs or he has given a further example of his incompetence."

MATTHEW FEARN



William Hague at the wheel yesterday: the lorry drivers want a diesel tax rebate

Hague rides with the truckers

By Susie Steiner

WILLIAM HAGUE took to the wheel of a lorry yesterday to support a campaign against fuel taxes which hauliers claim are crippling their industry. Hundreds gathered at Westminster in a protest organised by the Road Haulage Association against an anticipated 6 per cent above-inflation rise in fuel duty in the Budget.

Campaigners say this will add £18,000 to the average haulier's annual fuel bill, making it impossible for them to compete with continental rivals. The price of a tank of diesel is about £255 in Britain, against £156 in France and £129 in Luxembourg. European hauliers can tout for business anywhere in the single market. High running costs will cost the haulage industry 53,000 jobs by the 2002, according to the RHA.

Mr Hague, who sat in the cab of a vast yellow Meachers' lorry and ignored the calendar of naked ladies behind his head, said the Conservatives "would not have let the fuel escalator get to this point". He added: "This is an industry with a problem. There are good environmental reasons for taxing fuel, but not to the point where people go and buy it abroad. They are not using less fuel. It simply means less revenue for this country." The RHA wants an "essential user rebate" for using diesel for commercial purposes.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Omagh: publican charged

A publican has been charged in connection with the Omagh bomb that killed 29 people on August 15 last year. Colm Murphy, 48, of Ravensdale, in the Republic, was charged in Dublin with conspiring to cause an explosion between August 13 and 16, 1998 and with membership of the IRA on August 14.

Mr Murphy, one of seven men arrested in the Irish Republic over the weekend, is the first person to be charged in connection with the bombing.

Mr Murphy, who is originally from south Armagh in Ulster, said little during the five-minute hearing at the Dublin Special Criminal Court, only answering "yes" to his name. He owns a building company and is the owner of a pub in Dundalk.

Death threats

Republican paramilitaries carved a death threat on to a woman's limbs after breaking into her home in Bessbrook, South Armagh, early yesterday and finding a man they were looking for was not there. The four children of Tanya Fleming, 31, hid upstairs during the attack.

GM food curb

The Local Government Association's public protection committee urged local councils in England and Wales to ban the use of genetically modified food in schools, care homes and meals-on-wheels services for five years "to protect the public from the potential risks of GM organisms".

Teacher dies

A teacher has been found strangled in his ransacked motel room in California. The body of John Simpson, a bachelor in his mid-fifties who was head of music at a Birmingham school, was discovered last Friday by police in San Diego, where he was on holiday. A man is being questioned.

Asian donors

Asian people are being urged to become organ donors to avoid the risk of rejection of organs from inter-racial transplants. For cultural reasons few Asians are prepared to allow their organs to be used yet they have a much higher level of the diseases which can be cured by transplant.

Divorce victory

A woman awarded a £500,000 divorce settlement, has won the right to ask her multi-millionaire former husband for more. Julia Oriska Lambe Clark, 49, argued that she should also have been allowed to keep the £600,000 home because she suffers from agoraphobia.

Bank will not shadow euro

By Philip Webster, political editor

GORDON BROWN will not tell the Bank of England to peg the value of the pound to that of the euro in preparation for Britain joining the single currency, the Treasury disclosed yesterday.

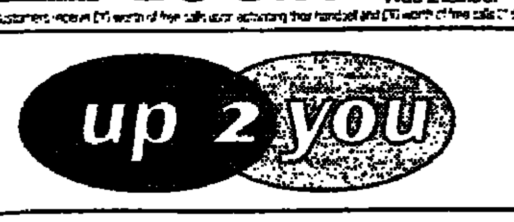
As the Conservatives claimed massive public opposition to the Prime Minister's "change of gear" over the euro, Treasury officials moved to clarify the role of the Bank. The Chancellor is to use the Budget on March 9 to reaffirm that the Bank's monetary policy committee, which sets interest rates, will continue to be responsible for delivering an inflation target of 2.5 per cent.

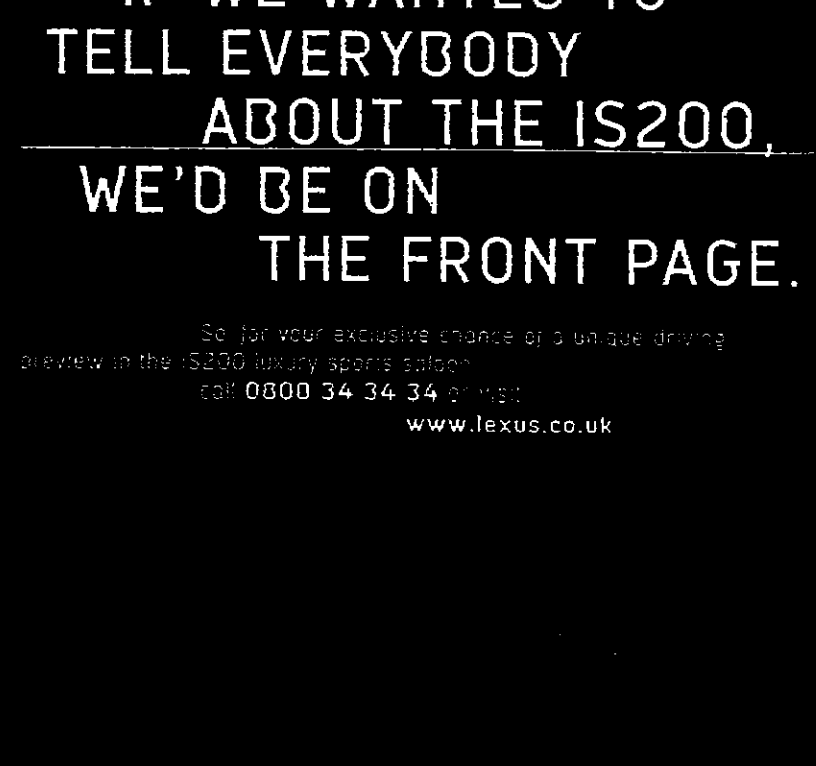
Eddie George, the Bank governor, had warned on Tuesday that there could be a policy clash if he was asked to achieve convergence with "euroland" as well as keeping the inflation target. He told a Commons committee that the Government had not informed him that it should be his objective to keep the pound in line with the euro which has fallen against the pound.

A senior Treasury adviser said yesterday: "The Bank cannot be asked to try to achieve two different targets at the same time. That is why we have not asked it and why we do not intend to do so. The Bank's target is to deliver 2.5 per cent inflation."

In the Commons yesterday Tony Blair insisted that the pound would not have to shadow the euro in the run-up to joining the single currency.

Senior economists believe that, in practice, the pound and the euro will naturally converge if the economic conditions are to be met for British entry. Mr Blair and Mr Brown are anxious to avoid the language of "shadowing" after the difficulties faced by Nigel Lawson shadowing the mark in 1987-88.





Survivors from the Galtür avalanche arrive in Landeck yesterday

Alps wreak revenge for decades of greed

Man is the author of his own undoing in the mountains, writes Roger Boyes

SKIERS stood shoulder-to-shoulder on the train to Landeck yesterday, excited by the prospect of fresh snow and barely aware that the Tyrol was suffering its worst avalanches for almost 50 years.

Crowding on to the train out of Landeck were the first evacuees from the disaster zones: Dutch and Germans with tired, creased faces, their skis abandoned in the buried Paznaun Valley.

Observing the irrational pull of the slopes — one rescue worker called it "snow blindness" — it was difficult to resist the impression that the Galtür disaster, like so many other seemingly natural catastrophes, was man-made. Two weeks earlier, when the avalanches first started to roll through the Alps in western Austria, Switzerland and France, no warning bells were sounded.

Even when ten people were killed in Chamonix, when at least eight were buried in the canton of Valais, even then it was tourism as usual in Austria. On Tuesday Hansjörg Kroll — tourism chief of the Austrian Chamber of Commerce — was able to say: "We must thank the Lord God for sending us this snow."

Bookings were up by 3 per cent, ever more skiers were being squeezed on to pistes that now resemble snowy autobahns.

The Alps, it seems, are claiming their revenge for decades of human exploitation. The mountains are being overrun by commerce: a million lorries a year cross the Alps: 50,000 vehicles a day use the Brenner motorway in the high season, emitting pollution levels equal to those of north European cities.

Cars are allowed to move ever higher in the mountains. At the foot of the most prominent peaks there are huge car parks. "Using a car as a private cave from which to stare out at mountain scenery is pointless — it does not encourage meditation, only pollution," said a top climber, Reinhold Messner, who is campaigning to save the Alps.

Global warming means that the snow arrives later each year and one has to go higher to ski. This is bad for tourism. So the regional tourism managers deploy snow cannon firing volleys of water on to the slopes and devastating the plant life.

The martial simile is appropriate: mankind is at war with Europe's most spectacular natural resource. Every winter 70,000 kilos (154,000 lb) of explosives is dropped from helicopters or ski lifts to make the pistes shiny and so keep the visiting skier happy.

Avalanche researchers in Switzerland and Franceknow that the climate is changing dramatically. Last summer was unusually hot in the Alps and this winter was always likely to be odd.

Rudi Mair of the Avalanche Research Centre, based at Davos, Switzerland, said the latest avalanches, although so far not as deadly as those of the winter of 1951, are the result of an extraordinarily unhappy combination: new snow falling intensely for a week and, because of the extremely cold temperatures, not binding with the existing snow blanket.

Gales shifted this unstable snow. Then came rain which made the snow not only unstable but also heavy. More than 40 people have died in the Alps this winter. It is a safe bet that this will not be the final death toll. The mountain gods are angry.

Second avalanche hits Tyrol resort

FROM ROGER BOYES IN LANDECK, WESTERN AUSTRIA

A SECOND avalanche 45 ft high hit the outskirts of the Austrian resort of Galtür last night, heightening fears that tourists and villagers trapped in the Tyrolean village would be entombed by snow unless they were evacuated swiftly.

Rescue workers launched a huge helicopter airlift to clear the resort — known as the "Gem of the Tyrol" — before more avalanches occur. About 200 soldiers and firemen, using tracker dogs and scanning devices, managed to recover 16 corpses, including three children and a pregnant woman. About 25 people are missing and the toll is certain to rise in the worst Austrian alpine disaster in almost 50 years.

At the onset of darkness yesterday, the airlift had to be called off as visibility was reduced to ten yards and warnings grew of a snow storm. The second avalanche hit a few scattered houses between the villages of Galtür and Ischgl, heightening fears that the suffering was not yet over.

"It's a race against time," Major Thomas Schönherr, of the Austrian Army, said. "The weather forecast is poor and new snow is expected."

The avalanche hit Galtür at speeds of 180mph, destroying four buildings and stopping just short of the church.

Doctors said yesterday that although there was little chance of finding survivors under the tonnes of snow — since most avalanche victims suffocate after about 15 minutes — there could be people still clinging to life in the corners of the ruined, buried buildings.

"At first we thought we had a chance and that we could revive some of those we pulled out of the snow. But it was hopeless, just hopeless," said one of the doctors.

More than 2,000 tourists and villagers shivering with cold and suffering from shock, their faces streaked with tears, waited yesterday for the promised evacuation. But even with helicopters landing and taking off every two minutes — the scores of Austrian helicopters were supported by ten large US Blackhawks from Nato bases in Bavaria and 40 helicopters from Italy — there seemed to be no chance of emptying the village before nightfall and the onset of new snow. Many will have to endure a second night of fear.

Early today those co-ordinating the rescue operation will decide whether to clear the approach roads, a task that could take at least six hours. Meteorologists indicate that there may be relatively less snow today and tomorrow, offering a window of opportunity to evacuate those trapped, before the weather turns nasty again at the weekend.


Rescue workers tend a victim airlifted from Galtür

Galtür is one of a dozen villages in the Tyrol, the Vorarlberg and neighbouring Switzerland to be cut off. The others include the fashionable resort of Lech, where the mayor says inhabitants are running short of fresh food, and among whose trapped victims are Princess Caroline of Monaco and her husband Prince Ernst August of Hanover.

But these villages do not face the imminent danger of Galtür, where the sense of despair is growing by the hour. In a telephone call from the village Dr Ulrike Köhler appealed for faster action. "We need many, many more helicopters. We have been standing here since early morning with nothing but blankets and tea . . . We have to get out."

Viktor Klima, the Austrian Prime Minister, promised to cut red tape and provide urgent aid to all victims. He also backs a local decision to start evacuating the whole of the Paznaun Valley where about 20,000 people are stranded.

AP


A photo taken from an Austrian Army helicopter shows the resort of Galtür, where 16 bodies have been recovered

THE ALPS

Railways: 5,000 miles.
Roads: [illegible] miles.
Ski lifts: 12,000.
Airfields: 300.
Concentration of people in Alpine resorts during high season: Between 2,500 and 5,000 per square mile.
Number of [illegible]: 40,000, with a total length of 75,000 miles.

Hopes fade for lost hikers

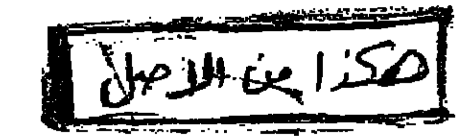
FROM SUSAN BELL IN PARIS

IN SWITZERLAND the death toll from a series of avalanches climbed to nine yesterday as rescue teams found the body a farmer near the ruins of his 200-year old home in the central canton of Uri.

Rescuers were still searching for three French tourists after a weekend avalanche in the southwestern village of Evolène where seven people died.

In France fears were growing for three hikers who have been missing for eight days in arctic conditions in the Alps. The hikers have been able to contact rescuers by mobile phone and are sheltering in a makeshift igloo high in the mountains. An unsuccessful pre-dawn rescue attempt yesterday by four helicopters was hampered by fog. Emergency workers were preparing for another rescue attempt last night.

One of two hikers who had been missing for four days in the Pyrenees died of hypothermia in hospital yesterday, just a few hours after he and his woman partner were rescued.



VSO recruits flee 'workaholic' life

Nurses lead surge in Third World volunteers, reports Helen Rumbelow

A CRISIS in job satisfaction and Britain's "workaholic" culture are thought to be behind a big rise in people volunteering to work in the Third World.

Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) said yesterday that it had received a 25 per cent surge in applications in the past year, the largest increase in nearly a decade.

It has been overwhelmed by applications from nurses, a 55 per cent rise in a year of conflict between the profession and the Government over pay and conditions.

In total more than 19,000 people have contacted VSO about volunteering in the past six months. It has 1,700 people abroad in 61 countries.

In an attempt to discover the cause of the rise, the organisation commissioned a survey which found that over half the British workforce think people are becoming workaholics to keep up with their jobs.

One in four people felt that work was "taking over their lives" and a similar number felt their values were different from their employer's, according to survey of more than 1,000 adults by NOP.

Two-thirds of people said that they would choose a job that paid less but was more enjoyable over a better-paid job. Jonathan Dimbleby, the broadcaster and VSO president, said of the survey: "It's good news wrapped in bad news. The good news is that our fellow men and women have values that mean more than just money but it is in the context of rather depressing news about their levels of satisfaction with work, which takes up 100,000 hours of our lives."

> 'The Third World is benefiting from the expertise of British nurses because of a demoralised NHS'

The Third World was benefiting from the British expertise in nursing because of a demoralised NHS, he said.

"To have a surge in nursing applicants at a time when the Government is trying to respond to an 18,000 shortfall in nurses must be very worrying for the health service."

He added: "Nurses come to us saying they find their work increasingly stressful, with violence on the wards, and they are not able to take care of patients in the way they would like to." The Royal College of Nursing said that the numbers of members volunteering to work abroad came as no surprise.

"Nurses are obviously highly skilled people with a lot of transferable skills and in this country we are seeing them leave nursing because they feel undervalued and under stress," it said.

Matthew Bell, director of communications at VSO, said that the millennium was also motivating people to change direction. The survey found that it was making 20 per cent of people question how much they got out of life. "The end of the century gives people pause for thought, like birthdays or new year, and now they feel that they're working harder and harder, slogging away at their job but that they may not even be in tune with what they are working for."

A typical nursing volunteer is Sandy Hazzard, from Bedford, who is planning to leave for the Tropics after more than 20 years of working in Britain. She has yet to decide her destination but feels that her working conditions in recent years have compelled her to leave.

She said: "I have become more disillusioned with working in the health service, more stressed. My life now seems to be work, work, work.

"I just feel that the time is right to move out of my current entrapment and go and do something for which I will personally feel more valued, where my knowledge and skills gained over the years will be utilised to the full."

She works at senior management level at a hospital she prefers not to name where she says that lack of staffing has put on tremendous pressure.

"There is so much more pressure on nurses who are working at an increasing pace all the time, they do feel very devalued and demoralised."

Ms Hazzard has grown-up children who were surprised by her announcement but now they are supportive. Most of her colleagues regard her with some envy, she said. "A lot of them say, 'I wish I could do that'."


Sandy Hazzard, heading for the Tropics after over 20 years with the health service

Dobson hails nursing campaign

BY A CORRESPONDENT

A GOVERNMENT campaign to attract former nurses back to the NHS was hailed as a success yesterday by Frank Dobson, the Health Secretary.

Since the launch of the £5 million advertising campaign at the end of last month 2,920 qualified nurses have contacted the 24-hour recruitment line for information packs. By 5pm yesterday 36,500 people had called the Nursing Line expressing an interest in the profession.

Health officials said that the calls from trained nurses meant that almost one in six of those not currently working in the health service had contacted the line in 24 days.

Ministers have increased the number of nurse training places but are desperate to lure experienced professionals back from the independent sector. They also want to entice women who have given up nursing to have a family back to the profession with family-friendly practices and flexible hours.

Mr Dobson said: "This is a hugely encouraging response. It shows that our package of measures is proving attractive to the pool of qualified nurses not working in the NHS.

"Getting more nurses back into the NHS, particularly experienced nurses, is key to the modernisation of the NHS."

Dome snow starts blizzard of souvenirs

BY DOMINIC KENNEDY

A MILLENNIUM Dome in a snowstorm will be launched on the Christmas toy market as part of a variety of souvenirs ranging from fridge magnets to Wedgwood dinner services. The merchandising strategy for the Greenwich exhibition was unveiled yesterday, along with a bargain travel offer and details of a zone made entirely from cardboard.

The Dome in a snowstorm may be considered by some to be in dubious taste, following the collapse under heavy snow in Montreal this winter of a stadium roof built by the same company which supplied the roof in Greenwich.

Other souvenirs are likely to become collectors' items. Dartington Crystal, Staffordshire Tableware and Remarkable Pencils have been chosen to produce crystal glasses, fine-bone china and time capsules. Pencil sharpeners, attache cases, backpacks, satchels, tea cloths and lapel badges showing the Dome or its motif will arrive in shops in the autumn.

A range of millennium books is being launched. *The Story Behind The Dome* is being written by Adam Nicolson, author of *Restoration: The Rebuilding of Windsor Castle*. He has been given exclusive access to private discussions between politicians, contractors and executives.

There will be a *3D Pop Up Model of the Dome*. Dorling Kindersley is also producing a cross-section poster of the Dome, a sticker book, *Factastic Millennium Facts*, a personal organiser and *Millennium Child*, a snapshot of British children. For adults, there will be a coffee table photographic book *The Millennium Experience* and *The Millennium Dome — The Official Book*. HarperCollins is launching a Dome map and *The Sacred Sites of Britain Millennium Experience Game*.

A giant spiral building made of recycled cardboard was unveiled as one of the most innovative attractions of the Dome. The Local Zone, created from a million pieces of card and some steel, will be the first paper building in Europe. A Japanese designer, Shigeru Ban, who has created sturdy structures from paper, is advising the architects Gumuchdjian & Spence. It will be varnished to be fireproof.

Viewers of BBC's *Blue Peter* programme were asked on Monday to send pieces of cardboard to a paper mill in Halifax. The first 50,000 will have their names displayed in the Dome. By yesterday, the Post Office had to provide a truck to deliver all the cardboard. The architect Philip Gumuchdjian, producing a model of his house of cards at New Millennium Experience Company headquarters, said: "It's the ultimate case of saying, Here's one I made earlier."

Travel packages are being negotiated. National Express is offering £9.99 return fares from anywhere in England, Scotland and Wales.

Smith reassures Church leaders

BY MARK HENDERSON

THE Culture Secretary, Chris Smith, yesterday reassured Church leaders that Christianity will have a place at the heart of celebrations in the Dome in the face of a boycott threat led by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

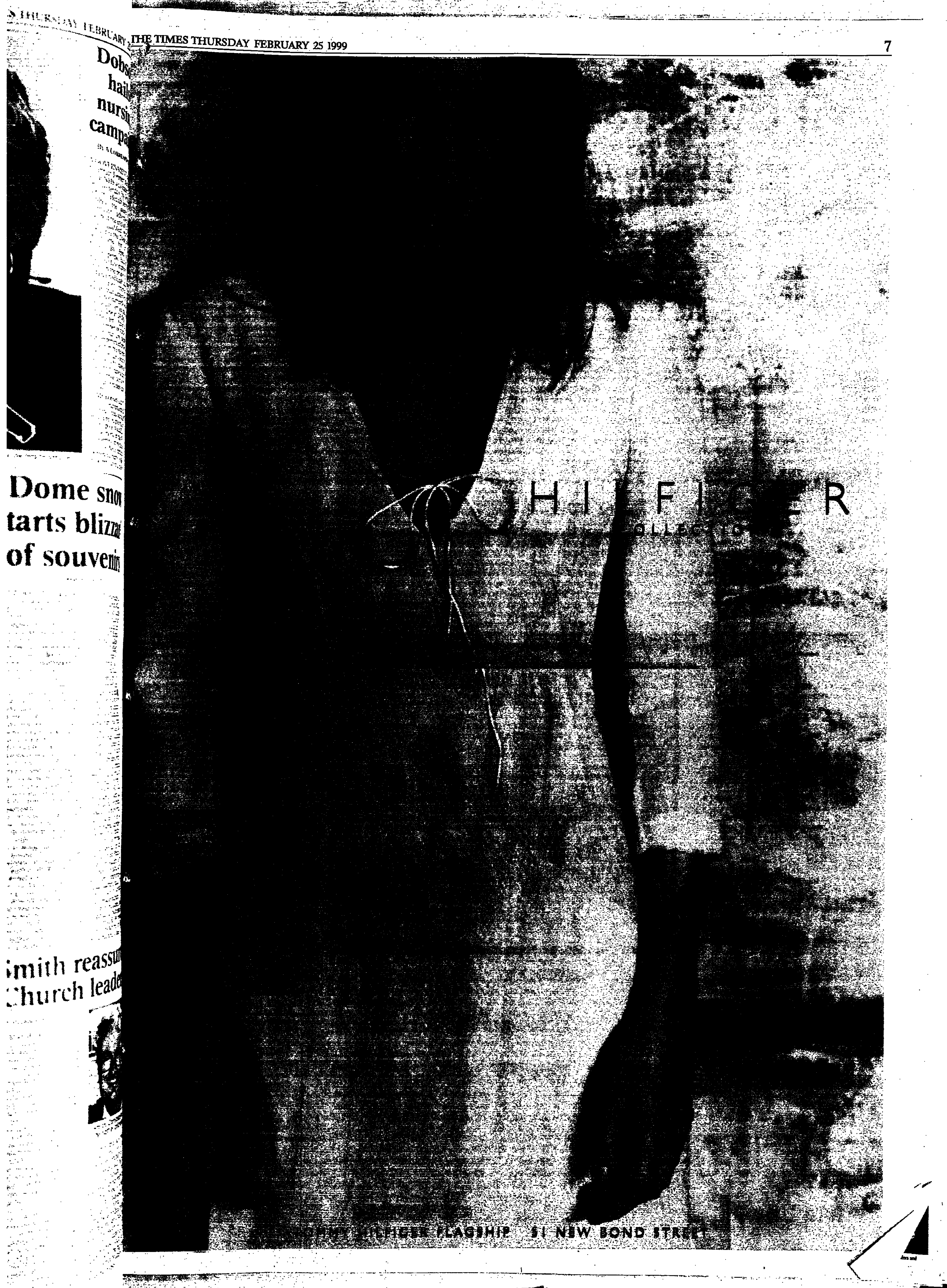
Giving evidence to the Commons Culture Select Committee, Mr Smith told MPs that fears that Christianity was being sidelined were "unnecessary worries", and pledged that festivities would reflect the millennium's significance as a "Christian anniversary".

The move by the Culture Secretary, who also chairs the Millennium Commission, follows remarks by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey, that he and the Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Basil Hume, might boycott the Dome on New Year's Eve if its celebrations were not "anchored in incarnation".

The religious leaders "will be in our churches" if there is no significant Christian element in the Dome, Dr Carey says in an interview with the *Catholic Herald*. Mr Smith confirmed that the "Millennium Moment" — a church-sponsored initiative under which people will light a candle for a minute's reflection and read an ecumenical affirmation of hope — would form part of the build-up to midnight in the Dome.

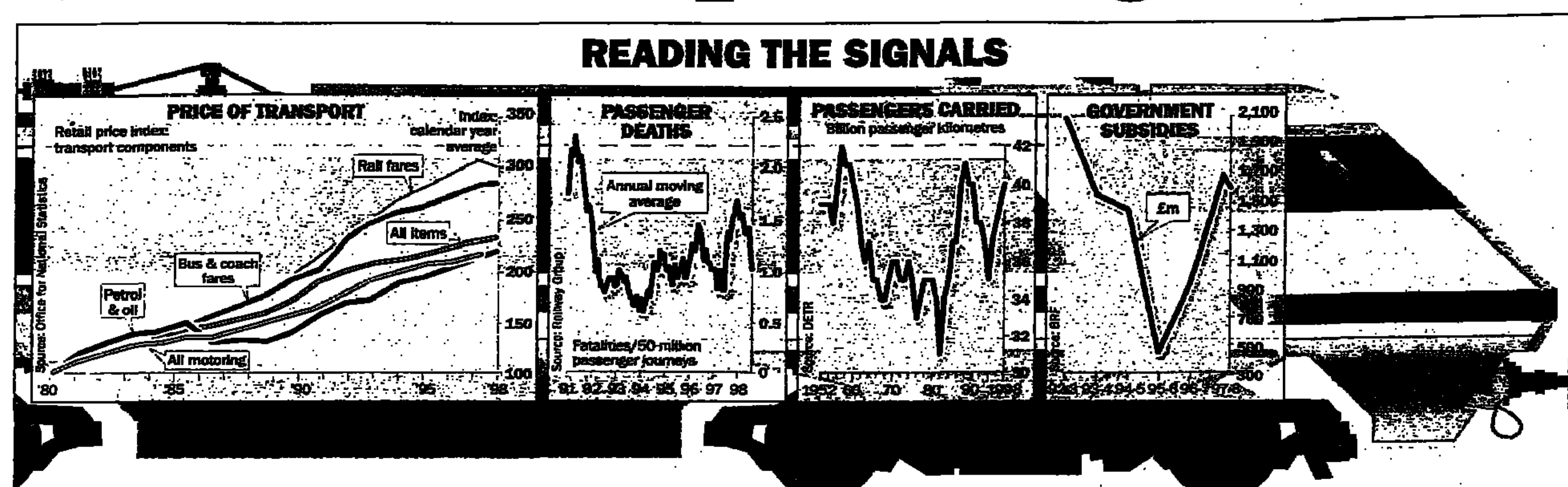

Smith: Christianity will be part of celebration

The New Millennium Experience Company had concerns about the safety of 10,000 people lighting candles together, but solutions such as electric candles were being sought, he said. Church leaders would be welcome guests.


HILFIGER
TOMMY HILFIGER FLAGSHIP 51 NEW BOND STREET

Rail chiefs face passenger's ire

Summit on state of the railways could turn into a blood-letting session, reports **Arthur Leathley**



FIVE regular train users will lead a "people's protest" over railway standards at the first public railway summit today.

The passengers will address a London conference called by John Prescott and attended by Tony Blair and senior figures from most of Britain's big rail companies. The Deputy Prime Minister has called regular travellers from all over Britain to the conference to voice their criticisms.

The passengers, selected by rail-user groups, have been encouraged by government officials to give a "warts and all" assessment of the railways. Their views are expected to spark a heated debate which senior industry figures fear could reduce the conference to a blood-letting session.

Tensions are running high within the rail industry, which has been lambasted by Mr Prescott as a "national disgrace" and is faced with halting steady increases in late-running trains.

Mr Prescott underlined his commitment to improving railway standards last night by announcing the appointment of Sir Alastair Morton, the former chairman of Eurotunnel, as chairman of the Strategic Rail Authority, which is to be set up in April to oversee regulation. Although Sir Alastair will begin his £120,000 2½-days-a-week job immediately, Mr Prescott has yet to receive the go-ahead for legislation to give the authority important powers.

Some companies are expected to mount a vigorous defence at today's summit. They claim that Mr Prescott's repeated criticism is in danger of undermining a fledgling privatised industry that has made other improvements. Rail managers cite reduced fares on the busiest routes, more passengers, higher investment, improved safety and better train information as evidence that privatisation is already bringing passenger benefits. Also speaking today is Glenda Jackson, the Transport Minister, who will present a vox pop film of passenger opinion.

Government officials insist that the aim of today's summit is to foster more positive relations within the industry. However several senior figures among the 200 people attending fear the day could be marred by the settling of old scores within the industry. "You cannot have six hours of sensible debate without some pretty significant differences of opinion. It will either be stage-managed and meaningless or pretty bloody and effective," a director of a London-based train company said.

Punctuality remains the industry's Achilles' heel, with delays slipping back to levels endured by British Rail passengers. After an unprecedented improvement in the first year of privatisation, when almost 94 per cent of trains ran on time, the level has slipped to 90 per cent.

"We can't overstate the importance of punctuality and we must put it right," says Gerald Corbett, of Railtrack, which claims a 40 per cent fall in the number of delays attributable to its track and signalling problems. Railtrack has set out plans to spend more than £17 billion over ten years and has already invested £3.6 billion in track and station improvements.

But Railtrack has been criticised publicly and privately by many of the 25 train operators and the rail regulator for its failure to invest sufficiently.

Concerns over safety on the railways has brought Railtrack under heavy pressure. However, although Railtrack has acknowledged worries over the training of some of its sub-contractors, the number of train collisions and deaths are at their lowest levels since the Second World War.

Christopher Garnett, chief executive of Great North Eastern Railway, one of the more successful train companies, will set out details of £2 billion of investment already undertaken by train companies. This contrasts with a stagnation in investment under British Rail, train firms say.

He will tell Mr Prescott that more than 1,500 new trains are due to be delivered over the next two years to help the industry to cope with the 1,000 additional daily services put on since privatisation.

Train operators will also point to the rapid growth in passenger numbers, which have risen by some 15 per cent across the network and by more than 30 per cent on some routes. The increases have put the industry on course to break the 1947 postwar record for passenger journeys within the next two years.

Operators say that the growth is in part caused by the below-inflation fare rises of the past two years, which they claim have saved passengers some £120 million. However, some of the growth can be attributed to increased economic prosperity and tightening up of ticket inspection, which has brought in revenue lost under British Rail.

Train firms are concerned that Mr Prescott's demands for continued passenger growth sit uneasily with his pressure for immediate improvements in punctuality. Train companies insist that the growth in passengers, leading to more trains being run, will have a negative effect on lines that are already heavily congested.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Daughter admits neglect

A woman who vacuumed round her mother during the seven days she lay collapsed on the floor admitted her manslaughter yesterday. Isabella Pearce, 62, died in hospital two days after she was taken unconscious by paramedics from the hallway of her bungalow. Her daughter, Benita Pearce, 33, a supermarket cashier from Foxhole, near St Austell, Cornwall, had gone to work, leaving her mother under a soiled duvet. Pearce had earlier denied manslaughter at Truro Crown Court but changed her plea after the judge rejected a defence submission that there was no case to answer. Sentence was adjourned for medical evidence.

River killing

Richard Archer, 41, a British car dealer who lived in Holland, drowned when he was thrown into a river in De Ronde Venen with concrete blocks tied to his feet, an inquest was told at Basingstoke. Verdict: unlawful killing.

Pavarotti date

Luciano Pavarotti will perform to 45,000 people at the first concert to be held at Twickenham Rugby Ground, on June 19. It will be his only British concert this year and precedes his wedding to Nicoletta Mantovani, 28, in July.

Fire blunder

Fire destroyed almost a square mile of protected heathland at Holt Heath nature reserve near Wimborne, Dorset, when "controlled burning" by the conservation group English Nature set alight heath and gorse bushes.

Smoker banned

The holiday airline Airtours banned a couple after one of them smoked in the lavatory on a flight to Calgary, Canada. Shane Baker and Josefa Perez had to pay £600 to fly home to Manchester with another airline.

Egg thieves' haul

The nests of more than 60 rare breeding birds were plundered last year by egg thieves and bird of prey collectors. Most frequent targets were peregrines with 25 nests raided, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds reported.

CORRECTION

Our reproduction (February 17) of Paul Bryan's winning tune in St Paul's Cathedral's millennium hymn competition wrongly indicated *B flat* in the third bar. It should have been a high D, and we apologise for the error.

Air control was over and out

By Simon de Bruxelles

TWO aircraft were left circling in the dark above an airport after the only air traffic controller on duty slipped and broke his ankle.

Greg Fanos, 39, had left the control tower at Bournemouth International Airport to make a cup of coffee a few minutes before the planes were due. He slipped on the stairs and broke his ankle in three places.

The pilots of the flights from Edinburgh and Malaga were unable to raise any response from the tower. The Euroscot ATR 72 turbo-prop, with 45 passengers, and the Palmair BAE 146 Whisper jet, with 88 passengers, flew circuits as Mr Fanos hauled himself back upstairs and summoned the airport fire brigade.

Mr Fanos, from Ringwood, Hampshire, said: "I was in terrible pain but forced myself to crawl back to the tower."

Geoff Berryman, air traffic services manager, said: "There was no question of the aircraft being in danger."

Family made suicide pact to thwart Nazis

Survivor tells Old Bailey war crimes trial that he is voice of the victims, reports Tim Jones

AN ELDERLY Jewish man yesterday told the Old Bailey that he and his family hid in a trench and decided to commit suicide rather than be rounded up by the Nazis who had already massacred 2,900 men, women and children.

His voice trembling with emotion, Ben-Zion Blustein told Britain's first war crimes trial that he would never forget the events surrounding the killings on Yom Kippur, the Jewish holy day of atonement, in September 1942.

Mr Blustein, 76, who now lives in Israel, told a jury that he was not seeking retribution. Nodding in the direction of Anthony Sawoniuk, 77, who faces trial for murder under the War Crimes Act, he said: "I came to this trial as a mouth for the tens or hundreds of people killed by this man. I came to be their voice."

He said that on the eve of Yom Kippur he, his mother, stepfather and young sister and brother refused to answer the roll call that led to the other Jews in the ghetto in the village of Domachevo, which is now in Belarus, being herded down the road to be executed and thrown into mass graves.


Ben-Zion Blustein: never saw his family again

Instead, he said, they squeezed into the freezing trench they had dug beneath their house and heard the sound of shootings and the cries of the dying.

In the darkness, he said, freezing and without food or water, they feared that escape into the forest was impossible and decided to commit suicide. His stepfather drank a bottle of morphine and succeeded in killing himself but the powdered drugs the rest of them took did not work.

His mother told him she had a dream in which a rabbi had told her he should leave. In spite of his protests, he said, she ordered him to go. Eventually, Mr Blustein said, a German truck turned up carrying Jews who had been saved from the massacre because they were deemed to be useful. Mr Blustein attracted the attention of one of the Jews who told the Germans he was good with horses.

At the camp he was taken to, he said, he saw one Jew, Mir Barlas, being handed over to the defendant and to two other policemen. Later, he said, Mr Sawoniuk had told him Barlas had been very courageous when he died and that he would soon meet him in the next world.

Mr Sawoniuk, he said, told him: "Don't think that because you are living here today you are going to live forever. As soon as the Germans leave here they will hand the Jews over to us and we will massacre you as we have massacred many up to this day."

Eventually, he said, he managed to escape from the cavalry base and joined up with the partisans who were fighting in the forests. He never saw his family again.

Mr Sawoniuk, from Bermondsey, South London, denies four charges of murder. The case continues.

DESMOND O'NEILL


Sir Evelyn and Lady de Rothschild: announced their separation after 25 years

Marriage split for Rothschild banking chief

By Alan Hamilton

SIR Evelyn de Rothschild and his wife of 25 years are to separate, it was announced yesterday. The 67-year-old chairman of his family's banking firm, an intensely private man, issued a joint statement with Lady de Rothschild which said simply: "This is a private matter and no further comment will be made."

Sir Evelyn married the American-born Victoria Schott in 1973 in her native New York. The couple have two sons, Anthony and David, and a daughter, Jessica.

Earlier this week Sir Evelyn announced that he intended to sell the largest and most expensive apartment ever put on the market in Britain, priced at £14 million.

The maisonette in Belgravia, Central London, covers an area equal to a dozen semi-detached houses. It was converted from the lower floors of two houses for Sir Evelyn, who bought it in 1997 but has never lived there. It is being sold as an empty shell. Last month it was reported that Sir Evelyn had bought a house in Cheyne Walk, one of London's most desirable addresses, for £12 million.

N.M. Rothschild, one of the oldest and most famous names in banking, is one of the few independent merchant banks left in London, founded in 1810 and run by family members ever since. Two years ago Amschel Rothschild, 41, a second cousin of Sir Evelyn who was a possible successor to head the family empire, committed suicide in a Paris hotel.

Last year the bank reported a 20 per cent increase in pretax profits to £70 million. Sir Eveyln's overall holding company, Rothschild Continuation Holdings, reported a 40 per cent increase in profits to £61 million.

Sir Evelynrecently joined a group campaigning against a plan by Thames Water to build 62 flats on the edge of Holland Park, near another of his homes in the capital.

Honour for team that went to war

By Shirley English

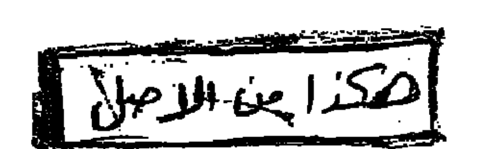
THE only British football team to enlist en masse to fight in the First World War will be remembered in France next week.

A group of Edinburgh police officers will lay a wreath at the Somme battlefield where five of the first team squad of Heart of Midlothian Football Club perished.

In November 1914 Hearts had won eight successive victories and were well on their way to becoming champions But when Kitchener launched his famous call to arms to combat a worrying dip in recruitment, the entire first team went to an Army office in Edinburgh and signed up together.

News of the action reached Whitehall via a telegram from an Edinburgh city official and was reportedly greeted with the exclamation: "Scotland has done splendidly."

The team and many of their followers formed C Charlie Company of the 16th Battalion of the Royal Scots, where their presence earned it the nickname "Sportsmen's battalion". By the end of the war seven of the 15-strong squad were dead.



Homosexual TV drama offends gays

Explicit scenes bring protests from a range of pressure groups, reports Helen Rumbelow

A NEW television drama with graphic depictions of underage homosexual sex has drawn condemnation from viewers' organisations and from gay groups.

The first episode of Channel 4's *Queer As Folk* on Tuesday night included explicit scenes of a promiscuous man of 29 seducing a 15-year-old boy whom he picked up in Manchester's "gay village". The naive boy was deposited at the school door the next day to the taunts of fellow pupils.

The programme drew a high number of complaints from the public. Gay rights campaigners and viewers' associations were united in their condemnation, accusing it of negative stereotypes and interfering with a political debate on lowering the age of consent for homosexuals.

Gub Neal, Channel 4's head of drama, said that it was intended to show gay life in ways that other channels "won't or can't". He added: "It doesn't condone underage sex. It's not seeking to portray Nathan, the 15-year-old character, as a victim. It can be a reality for gay men in the 1990s. The sex scenes are no more graphic than in other TV dramas shown on other channels post watershed."

The new series comes a month after the arrival on the channel of *Sex in the City*, a controversial comedy about dating and mating in New York. *Queer As Folk* is more graphic, both in terms of language and sexual content.

John Beyer, the general secretary of the National Viewers' and Listeners' Association, said it would complain to the Independent Television Commission. The channel owed the public an explanation of how it met statutory requirements of good taste and decency, he said. "This is Channel 4's attempt to influence public opinion at a time when there's a debate about the age of consent for homosexuals."

Brenda Oakes, a Manchester parent and spokesperson for the Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, said that the show was unrealistic about gay life and damaging for the cause of young homosexuals. "We are always pleased to see gay issues being tackled on television but are disappointed that Channel 4 have gone for sensationalism and stereotypes. We are campaigning for equal age of consent, equal respect, equal rights, and I don't think that the programme will help the fight for equality for our sons and daughters," she said.

Angela Mason, director of Stonewall, which campaigns for gay rights, said the programme traded in negative images they wanted to avoid. "It certainly didn't challenge any stereotypes. All the gay men wanted to have non-stop sex and all the lesbians wanted babies. It was ridiculous. I thought the explicit sex scenes with a youthful 15-year-old did smack of sensationalism."

OutRage, which campaigns against homophobia,expressed suspicion of Channel 4's motives for such a shocking first episode. "They put in a lot that was controversial for the commercial reason that people will want to keep watching it," a spokesman said.


The *Queer as Folk* cast, from front, Charlie Hunnan, Aidan Gillen and Craig Kelly

Houdini's one that got away is found at last

By Paul Wilkinson
North East Correspondent

HARRY HOUDINI'S one attempt to break into films has been discovered and will be screened at a festival in Britain next month.

The film starring the escapologist, a science-fiction melodrama titled *The Man From Beyond*, was made in 1922 and disappeared shortly afterwards. Now a copy of the old acetate film has been restored and will be shown in March at the Bradford Film Festival.

Bill Lawrance, the head of cinema at the National Museum of Photography, Film and Television in Bradford, said: "I have just been talking to an expert of the period and he was unaware of this attempt by Houdini to get into movies.

"Because no one seems to know about it, would suggest that it was not a success at the box office. Certainly we know of no other film by Houdini."

The 70-minute silent feature tells the story of a man who is rescued from an Arctic iceflow where he has been entombed for 100 years. He is slowly thawed out and returns to New York where he attends the wedding of a young woman who is the image of his own fiancée a century before. He discovers his love was this woman's grandmother.

Houdini manages some great escapes, including a scene where he saves a woman from falling over the edge of the Niagara Falls.



A poster for the film, unseen since its release

Leah head 'helpless against dealers'

By A Correspondent

THE head teacher of Leah Lawson, found dead from a suspected drugs overdose, said yesterday that her school was powerless against dealers on the estate where she lived.

Andrew Howlett, of Wintringham School, Grimsby, said that he had been aware of Leah's problems with drugs. Teachers, her family and social services had done their best to help her.

"At 13, Leah had a lifetime to look forward to. Her life was tragically cut short by her vulnerability to those who place the value of money above the value of a life," he said. "Schools cannot overcome the menace of drug abuse or eradicate it from society, which must face up to and produce effective strategies to prevent the misery and despair produced by drug-taking."

Leah was found slumped on a sofa at home on Saturday, the victim of what her mother, Jean, said she thought was a combination of methadone, Valium and nitrazepam.

Mr Howlett said that Leah was a kind and caring girl who "demonstrated sympathy and warmth" to her friends, but also "lived in a roller-coaster world where her moods would swing from happiness to despair". In recent months she had shown signs of increasing maturity.

☐ Police investigating Leah's death were questioning two people yesterday. A woman aged 24 was arrested on suspicion of supplying class A and C drugs and a man aged 46 was arrested on suspicion of theft and assisting the woman.

Clubbers of both sexes take Viagra

By Ian Murray
Medical Correspondent

YOUNG women and men are buying Viagra in nightclubs. Most take the anti-impotence drug with illegal drugs, oblivious to the medical risks. All claim that it improves their sexual performance.

Researchers have discovered that within weeks of Viagra being licensed last September it was available in clubs at £10 for a 50mg tablet, about double the prescription price.

Judith Aldridge and Fiona Measham of Manchester University were carrying out a two-year study of drug use among clubbers. A survey at a Manchester club last October revealed that 15 out of the 519 people asked to fill in a questionnaire said that they had used Viagra. The ten men and five women, of whom 14 were white and one Afro-Caribbean, were aged from 19 to 34. They obtained the drug from friends, partners, dealers, sex shops and Internet addresses.

In a letter to the *British Medical Journal* the two senior research fellows say that the 15 clubbers reported having used at least one other illegal drug. All but one had taken amyl nitrate, known in clubs as "poppers", which reacts with sildenafil, the active ingredient of Viagra, to cause a sudden fall in blood pressure that could lead to a stroke.

Dr Measham said yesterday: "The 15 represent 3 per cent of those we interviewed, a shatteringly high figure given that the drug had only been licensed for a very short time. These were just the ones who admitted taking Viagra."

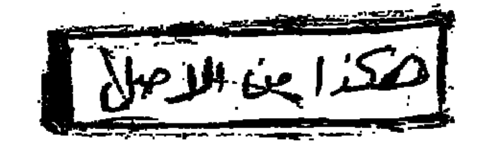


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George is jeered for refusing to apologise

By Paul Wilkinson, North East Correspondent

EDDIE GEORGE, the Governor of the Bank of England, was jeered on Tyneside yesterday during a visit in which he refused to apologise for remarks that have enraged people in the region.

It was his first visit since his comments to a local newspaper in October that job losses in the region were a price worth paying to curb inflation in the South.

As he stepped out of his car to deliver a speech at the Newcastle Civic Centre he was greeted with shouts of "scum" and "come and talk to us you coward" from a small crowd.

Several people waved banners saying: "Am I a price worth paying?", "Where's the apology Eddie?" and "The price you should pay — a P45". Inside Mr George thanked the audience of business leaders for their warm reception, adding: "It was not as warm as the one I received outside."

He was also able to achieve some personal satisfaction by putting down the reporter whose story sparked the controversy last year. Paul Linford, political editor of the Newcastle *Journal*, asked him: "Do you think you owe an apology to the people of the North East who lost their jobs last summer as a result of your policies?"

Mr George replied: "Absolutely not. I suggest you go back to political reporting rather than economic reporting."



Eddie George addressing the businessmen: the reception was warm, he said, but not as warm as the one from protesters

In his speech Mr George said he had "learnt a lesson about a particular journalistic technique which perhaps I should have learnt before. It was a disappointing experience, not because it got me into a certain amount of hot water — I am used to that in my job.

"It was disappointing, first, because of its unnecessary damaging effect on morale here in the region at what I know is a difficult time. And it was disappointing, too, because it created the impression that we at the Bank of England don't care about unemployment.

"In fact nothing could be further from the truth. Of course we care, just as you do, about activity and jobs in every sector of the economy and in every part of the country. So I've come to the North East today to set the record straight."

But afterwards Bill Midgely, president of the North East Chamber of Commerce, which arranged the visit, said: "I am disappointed. He really has not given us any hope for the future. His speech was more like that of a first-year economics student at university.

"We are going to see more pain for the companies of this region. He talked about more companies taking up the challenge but the way things are going there won't be any companies to do so."

The trip was criticised after it became obvious that Mr George would not meet redundant workers or the public and media except in strictly controlled circumstances. Four of his six appearances were private; cameras were allowed in to only two.

Advisers at the Bank said that he would not talk to reporters at either of them. Seperate interviews were granted to local broadcasters but he did not speak to local or national newspapers.

Mr Midgely said: "His visit is almost like a royal visit, it is so carefully orchestrated.

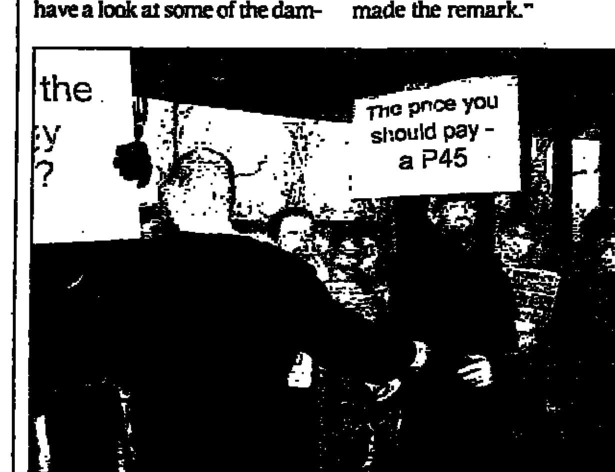
"We had hoped he would have a look at some of the damage the Bank's policies have done as well as seeing some of the successes. Since his comments last October we haven't had an answer to our questions."

Mr George's words had come just as the region learnt that almost 2,500 jobs were going at the Grove crane-makers plant in Sunderland and microchip factories run by Fujitsu in Co Durham and Siemens on North Tyneside.

The jobless total is still rising, contrary to the national trend, and unemployment is twice the national average. In an interview with BBC Radio Newcastle yesterday Mr George was asked if he would apologise. He replied: "Of course I very much regret the misrepresentation of what I said and particularly regret the damage that did to morale in the North East. I am very sensitive to that."

He agreed he had spoken the words as quoted. "But I then went on to explain that the sense was that stability across the country as a whole is what we target and that has produced the lowest unemployment for 20 years.

"It is true not just for the country as a whole but also every region in the country, including the North East. That is still higher than anyone would like and it is still higher than the average for the country as a whole but it is lower than it has been since 1980. That is the context in which I made the remark."



Demonstrators make their point outside the civic centre

Warming extends growing seasons

By Nick Nuttall, Environment Correspondent

SPRING is coming to Europe six days earlier than it was 30 years ago because of global warming, a scientific survey has found. Autumn is arriving almost five days later.

After a study of gardens from Ireland to Hungary and from Finland to Macedonia, researchers from the University of Munich say in the journal *Nature*: "This means the average annual growing season has lengthened by 10.8 days since the early 1960s. These shifts can be attributed to changes in air temperature."

Critics of the global-warming theory argue that rising use of electricity, central heating and other heat producing factors has artifically raised the temperature of cities, and that the rise has nothing to do with increasing levels of carbon dioxide building up in the atmospere and trapping the sun's heat.

The new research supports man-made global warming as the reason for the early spring and delayed autumn. "Only a few of the gardens are situated in city areas where the urban heat island could influence trends," it says. The study includes 616 springtime and 178 autumn surveys in the International Phenological Gardens network, which includes the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew. All hold genetically identical trees and shrubs.

House prices reach a £35m high

By Rachel Kelly, Property Correspondent

THE most expensive home ever to be offered on the open market in Britain is for sale at £35 million. The new owner's neighbours will be Princess Margaret, several other royals and the Sultan of Brunei.

The Crown Estate is selling 15a Kensington Palace Gardens, beside Kensington Palace in London. The 19th-century, five-storey, brick building has a swimming pool which extends from the basement under the garden.

The 20,000 sq ft house has grand entertaining rooms on the ground floor but purists might argue that the house is on the wrong side of the street because it does not back on to the grounds of Kensington Gardens.

There are ten bedroom and bathroom suites on the top three floors, and staff accommodation in a two storey house at the end of the garden.

The house, which is being sold on a new 99 year lease, was built in 1855 by the Blackfriars developer John Marriott Blashfield who was responsible for most of Kensington Palace Gardens development. He later went bankrupt.

It was previously the home of the Nigerian High Commission, which moved out five years ago. Since then the property has stood empty awaiting refurbishment by the Crown Estate.



THE LAWRENCE REPORT

‘Racist murder an affront to society’

Graphic account of 20 seconds that ended the life of Stephen Lawrence

BY ALAN HAMILTON

GRAPHIC and unequivocal language colours the opening chapters of Sir William Macpherson of Cluny's report, where he describes the incident lasting no more than 20 seconds that ended the life of Stephen Lawrence.

Stephen had been with his friend Duwayne Brooks during the afternoon of April 22, 1993. They were on their way home when at about 10.30pm they came to a bus stop in Well *Hall Road in Eltham*, southeast London. Stephen went to see if a bus was coming, and reached a position almost in the centre of the mouth of Dickson Road.

"Mr Brooks was part of the way between Dickson Road and the roundabout when he saw the group of five or six white youths who were responsible for Stephen's death on *the opposite side of the road*. Mr Brooks called *out* to ask if Stephen saw the bus coming. One of the youths must have heard something said, since he called out '*what, what nigger?*' With that the group came quickly across the road and literally engulfed Stephen."

Three witnesses were at the bus stop; all of them said the attack was sudden and short but none was able later to identify any of the suspects.

"The group of white murderers then disappeared down Dickson Road. We refer to *them as a group of murderers* because that is exactly what they were; young men bent on violence of this sort rarely act *on their own. They* are cowards and need the support of at least a small group in order to bolster their actions."

The report continues: "There is little doubt that all of *them would have been held to* be responsible for the murder had they been in court together with viable evidence against them. This murder has the hallmarks of a joint enterprise."

Stephen had been stabbed to a depth of about five inches on both sides of the front of his body to the chest and arm. Both stab wounds severed axillary arteries and blood must have been pumping out of and into his body as he ran up the road to join his friend, the report says.

In the words of the pathologist who later examined the body: "It is *surprising that he* managed to get 130 yards with all the injuries be had, but also the fact that the deep penetrating wound of the right side caused the upper lobe to partially collapse his lung. It is therefore a testimony to Stephen's physical fitness that he was able to run the distance he did before collapsing."

No great quantity of blood marked the scene of the attack or Stephen's subsequent track because he was wearing five layers of clothing.

"But *when he* fell he was bleeding freely, and nearly all of the witnesses who saw him lying there speak of a substantial quantity of blood." He lay by chance in the recovery position, his head looking left into the road and his left arm up.

"The medical evidence indicates that Stephen was dead before he was removed by the ambulancemen some time later. The amount of blood which had been lost would have made it probable that Stephen died where he fell *on the pavement, and probably within a* short time of his fall."

The report praises PC James Geddis, an off-duty officer driving past the scene with his wife on his way home from a prayer meeting. PC Geddis stopped to investigate, covered Stephen with a blanket or rug but, assuming the youth was in the care of others, did not administer first aid.

"We formed a favourable impression of PC Geddis and we reject the suggestion that he was not speaking the truth. He was after all the Good Samaritan who stopped when he saw that something had happened on the pavement."

Sir William then says starkly: "Stephen Lawrence's murder was simply and solely and unequivocally motivated by racism. It was the deepest tragedy for his family. It was an affront to society, and especially to the local black community in Greenwich. Nobody has been convicted of this awful crime. That also is an affront both to the Lawrence family and the community at large."

Those violent seconds in 1993 have been followed by extraordinary activity, without satisfactory result. From the Lawrence family's point of view, Sir William says, there has been a sequence of disasters and disappointments.

"Prolonged police investigations, in two distinct phases, produced no witnesses other than Mr Brooks who could properly purport to identify any of the attackers. Other sound evidence against the prime suspects, or against anybody else, is conspicuous by its absence. Even now after the unprecedented publicity of this inquiry, nobody has come forward to advance the case."

There is no doubt whatsoever, the report says, that the first Metropolitan Police investigation was palpably flawed and deserves severe criticism. But the underlying causes of that failure are more troublesome and potentially more sinister. The impact of incompetence and racism, and the aura of corruption or collusion, have been the subject of much evidence and debate.

"We believe that the immediate impact of the inquiry, as it developed, has brought forcibly before the public the justifiable complaints of Mr and Mrs Lawrence, and the hitherto underplayed dissatisfaction and unhappiness of minority ethnic communities, both locally and all over the country, in connection with this and other cases, as to their treatment by police."

Sir William emphasises one aspect of the case which, he says, has received less attention than it should. "The very existence of a sub-culture of obsessive violence, fuelled by racist prejudice and hatred against black people, such as is exemplified in the 1994 video films of the five prime suspects, is a condemnation of them and also of our society."

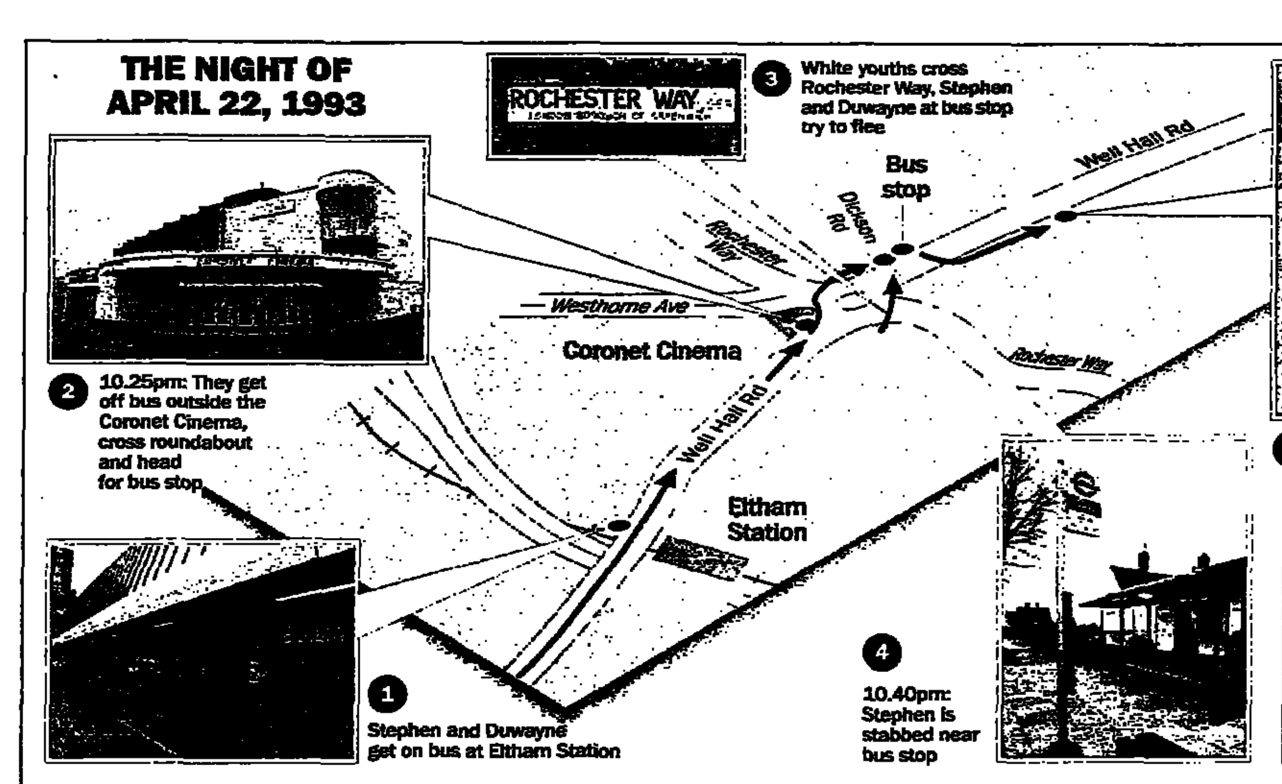
He continues: "The nature of [the suspects] in 1994, and indeed during their limited testimony in *1998*, must surely make us all determined that by education, family and community influence, proper policing, and all available means society does all that it can to ensure that the minds of present and future generations are not allowed to become violent and maliciously prejudiced."

Sir William adds: "If these suspects were not involved, there must have been five or six almost identical young thugs at large on the night of April 22, 1993, to commit this terrible racist crime."

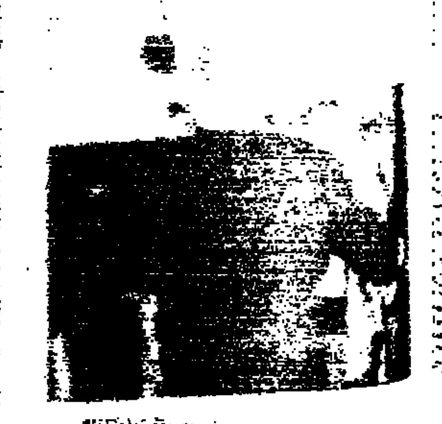
And he continues: "We must all see to it that such crimes do not and cannot happen again. A high priority must be for society to purge itself of such racist prejudice and violence which infected those who committed this crime for no other reason than that Stephen Lawrence was black."

Sir William concludes his introduction by quoting Lord Scarman's report on the Brixton riots of 1981, in which he says that racial disadvantage is a fact of British life, and that urgent action is required if it is not to become an endemic, ineradicable disease.

"It is a sad reflection upon the intervening years," Sir William concludes 18 years later, "that those extracted words have remained relevant throughout both parts of our Inquiry."



‘We must all see to it that such crimes do not *and cannot* happen again’



Praise for couple who comforted dying victim

‘You are loved, you are loved’ *may have been* the last words that Stephen ever heard

THE report reserves special praise for Conor and Louise Taaffe, who came upon the dying teenager as they walked from a prayer meeting at their local Roman Catholic church. Mrs Taaffe understood that hearing was the last sense retained by the dying, and whispered to him: "You are loved, you are loved."

Mr Taaffe's first thought was to try to place the injured youth in the recovery position, having seen a television broadcast on the St John Ambulance, but could not recall exactly what should be done. His wife said: "Oh no, no, Conor, he is the correct position, he is in the recovery position already." As Stephen lay on the pavement, Mr Taaffe remembered an involuntary movement of the head to the left and a sound as if Stephen was choking and trying to breathe. He put his hand on the young man's back and felt movement. Told that one of *the* attackers *had carried an* iron bar, Mr Taaffe's reaction was to think: "My God, what did they do with an iron bar to cause these injuries?"

In evidence, Mr Taaffe denied news reports that his wife had cradled the dying Stephen's head. "She put her *hand on Stephen's head and* whispered in his ear, 'You are loved, you are loved'."

By the time an ambulance arrived, it was evident that Stephen was dead. The couple said they *would* return to their church to pray for Stephen. When Mr Taaffe returned *home, he washed the blood* off his hands with water into a container, and poured the water at the foot of a rose tree.

The reports says: "The actions of Mr and Mrs Taaffe deserve *nothing but praise*. Their actions and attitude are to be applauded."



When Conor Taaffe washed the blood from his hands, he poured the water on a rose

Legacy will be social change

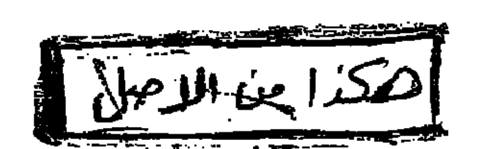
STEPHEN LAWRENCE will be remembered as a talented student whose legacy was to bring about change in society, the inquiry report concluded.

In a chapter devoted to Stephen and his parents, Neville and Doreen, Sir William Macpherson of Cluny wrote: "Stephen *Lawrence* was only 18 years old when he was murdered. He was happy and, as Doreen Lawrence told us, very bright. He wanted to be an architect. He was healthy and athletic, and he was much loved.

"*Nothing can compensate for the loss* the family suffered in Stephen's death at the hands of violent racists on April 22, 1993. His legacy must be the root-and-branch change that has to take place in society."

Sir William went on to record the words that had been chosen by Mrs Lawrence to end her statement to the inquiry. Mrs Lawrence said: "I would like Stephen to *be remembered as a young man who had* a future.

"He was well loved, and had he been given the chance to survive maybe he would have been the one to bridge the gap between black and white because he didn't distinguish between black or white. He saw people as people."





SUSPECTS



DAVID NORRIS
David Norris was 17 when he was arrested and a knife found at his home. The CPS threw out the case against him and so did a magistrate in a private prosecution. His father Clifford is a well-known South London criminal and the "Norris factor" is said to have involved *"the deliberate slowing down and 'fudging' of the investigation, so that the suspects, and in particular the suspect David Norris, were protected and ineffectively pursued."*



NEIL ACOURT
was 17 when an armoury of knives was found at the home he shared with his brother Jamie. The case against him was thrown out although he was identified by Brooks. He and Jamie modelled themselves on the Krays and police film shows him appearing to be a sadistic and violent racist
"The Acourts and others associated with them were plainly well known locally, but the local police had clearly not picked up or been made aware of that information."



JAMIE ACOURT
was 16. After CPS refused to prosecute he was acquitted in a private prosecution. Accused of persistently harassing Asian family. Warned about perjury at the inquiry over his evidence denying he and other suspects carried knives or were racists.
"It was apparent that they were known to be potentially violent, and that the Acourts fancied themselves as gang leaders."

LUKE KNIGHT
was 16 and the youngest of the group. A private prosecution against him failed. Police surveillance film also revealed he was a fervent racist.
"Neither Gary Dobson's nor Luke Knight's interviews could be said to have advanced the prosecution case at all. Both of them repeatedly denied involvement in the murder."
"We have confirmation that the suspects were then and certainly before that date infected and invaded by gross and revolting racism."

PETER JORDAN

Racism to blame for failed inquiry

Report highlights prejudice and places question mark over Met chief's future, says Jill Sherman

THE "pernicious and persistent" institutional racism of the police force played a crucial part in the failure of the Stephen Lawrence investigation, the Macpherson report suggests.

While the report makes clear that racial prejudice was not the only reason the investigation failed, it adds: "Upon all the facts we assert that the conclusion that racism played its part in this case is fully justified. Mere incompetence cannot itself account for the whole of the catalogue of failures, mistakes, misjudgments and lack of direction and control which bedevilled the Stephen Lawrence investigation."

The report criticises Sir Paul Condon, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, for failing to admit that institutional racism existed in his force. In what is seen as an implicit question mark over Sir Paul's survival, it suggests that until chief officers are able to accept that racism exists it will never be tackled.

"There must be an unequivocal acceptance of the problem of institutional racism and its nature before it can be addressed, as it needs to be, in full partnership with members of the minority ethnic communities," the report says. "Any chief officer who feels unable to respond will find it difficult to work in harmony and co-operation with the community in the way that policing by consent demands."

The report claims that in his evidence, Sir Paul placed too much emphasis upon individual racists and individual malpractice and cautioned against the use of the term "institutional racism". He did not accept that unconscious or covert racism was evident in any area of the Lawrence investigation. He refused to accept this even when given examples of racism such as the patronising of Mr and Mrs Lawrence and the refusal to accept racist motivation by some officers.

Sir Paul admitted only that there could be racism in the police service but not that there was any. "There is a small but significant difference between acknowledging that such features 'can' exist and acknowledging that they 'do' exist," said the Macpherson report. "There is thus a discernible difference between the approach of the Association of Chief Police Officers and other chief officers and the somewhat less positive approach of the commissioner," the report says.

> 'Conclusion that racism played its part in the case is fully justified'

But Sir William Macpherson of Cluny makes clear that not all police officers are racist and that institutional racism was prevalent in other areas. "Racism, institutional or otherwise, is not the prerogative of the police service. It is clear that other agencies including for example those dealing with housing and education also suffer from the disease," says the report.

"If racism is to be eradicated there must be specific and co-ordinated action both within the agencies themselves and by society at large, particularly through the educational system, from pre-primary school upwards." Sir William gives his own definition of institutional racism as: "The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantages minority ethnic people."

Sir William says that institutional racism, as he defined it, existed both in the Metropolitan Police and in other police forces and other institutions countrywide. It was prevelant in four key areas, he says:

☐ In the actual Lawrence investigation including the family's treatment at the hospital, the initial reaction to the victim and witness Duwayne Brooks, the family liaison, the failure of many officers to recognise Stephen's murder as a purely "racially motivated" crime and the lack of urgency and commitment in some areas of the investigation.

☐ The huge disparity in stop and search figures nationwide, which points to a "clear core conclusion of racist stereotyping".

☐ A significant under-reporting of racial incidents caused by a lack of confidence in police and their perceived unwillingness to take these incidents seriously. "We find irresistible the conclusion that a core cause of under-reporting is the inadequate response of the police service which generates a lack of confidence in victims to report incidents."

☐ The failure of police training. "Not a single officer questioned before us in 1998 had received any training of significance in racism awareness and race relations throughout the course of his or her career."

Sir William makes the point that not all members of the police force are racist. "We hope and believe that the average police officer and average member of the public will accept that we do not suggest that all police officers are racist and will both understand and accept the distinction we draw between overt individual racism and the pernicious and persistent institutional racism we have described."



Under fire: Sir Paul Condon was criticised by the inquiry for failing to admit there was institutionalised racism in his force

Evil influence of suspect's father in crime underworld

Richard Ford and Stewart Tendler on claims of collusion, trial fixing and schooling of arrested men

QUESTIONS about corruption and collusion between some officers in the Lawrence case and the families of the prime suspects hung over the murder investigation. The allegations were made after the Lawrence family uncovered links between a detective and Clifford Norris, father of one of the suspects and a dominant figure in the South London underworld.

The "Norris factor" emerges at important points in the Macpherson report, including the claim that Norris, who is serving seven years on drugs charges, was involved in "fixing" an earlier trial in which his son David was acquitted of a stabbing. It was later claimed that the Norris factor led to the slowing down of the Lawrence investigation to ensure that David Norris and the other suspects were protected during the initial inquiry.

Norris senior, nicknamed Nozzer, has a fierce reputation in South London as a criminal who should not be crossed. After beginning with violent robberies, he moved into the drug business and flourished. He moved from south London to a large, secluded house in Chislehurst and appeared to have ready cash to by himself bought a Porsche.

The inquiry was told that before the Lawrence stabbing, David Norris, said to be the leader of the gang linked to the murder, was accused of stabbing another man called Stacey Benefield with a sword. Michael Mansfield, QC, for the Lawrences, said that Clifford Norris engineered his son's acquittal.

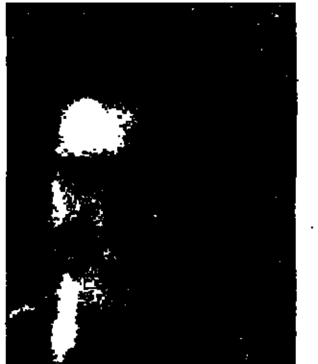
The Macpherson report rules that "no collusion or corruption is proved to have infected the investigation of Stephen Lawrence's murder". But it adds that his presence in the background clearly raises "much suspicion".

It says there was no evidence that any approach was made by Clifford Norris to any of the police officers investigating the Lawrence murder. "It would be most unfair and unjust to draw any conclusion against any of those officers in the absence of any indication or allegation that they have been involved or connected with Clifford Norris."

But the report says there was evidence of corruption or attempted corruption in the Benefield case. "The strong inference is that Clifford Norris was behind the corruption and that he was closely involved in trying to pervert the course of justice by bribing Stacey Benefield and another witness", the report stated.

It highlights the "evil influence" of Clifford Norris during the second investigation into the Lawrence murder. He was on the run but senior officers suspected "his influence while at large was potentially very damaging". The report says that the police suspected rightly that Norris was in touch with David and that he might have "schooled" the four suspects in connection with their arrests and about intrusive police surveillance.

During the first investigation of the Lawrence murder, officers were aware that young and impressionable witnesses were holding back because they were afraid of the Norris family. The report says that the first investigation team failed to seek Norris senior and that positive Efforts should have been made to remove his "malign influence". "It is inexplicable that more was not done until summer 1994 to arrest Clifford Norris." The Macpherson inquiry was told that during the private prosecution of three Lawrence suspects at the Old Bailey in 1996, DC David Coles, one of the officers escorting Duwayne Brooks, the key witness, was disciplined after being seen with Norris in a public house in South London. He had falsely recorded that he was at the Old Bailey trial.



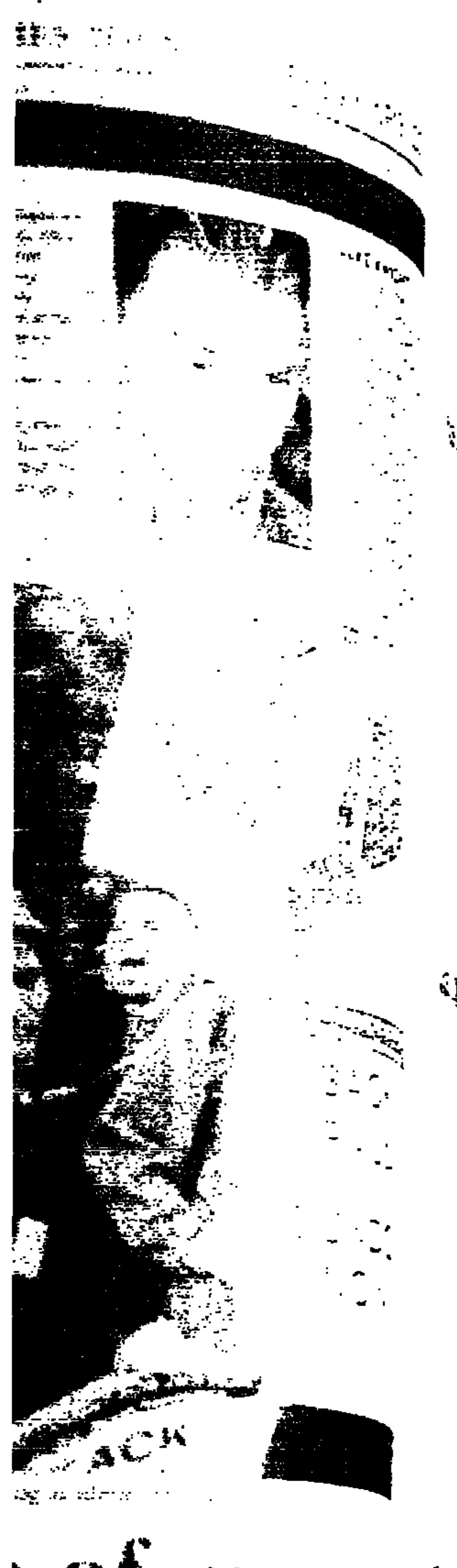
Clifford Norris: seven years for drugs offences

The report highlights Mr Norris's involvement in the earlier Stacey Benefield case. In March 1993, before the Lawrence killing, Stacey Benefield was stabbed in the chest while walking in Eltham. He named David Norris as his attacker but he was not willing to give a statement or help police.

After the Lawrence murder, the police received information that David Norris and Neil and Jamie Acourt were responsible for the attack on Mr Benefield. After Norris was charged, Benefield and his friend were approached by a man who gave them £2,000 and said he wanted the case against Norris dropped. The two men believe that the man was Clifford Norris who said: "This is how I sort people out, not by shooting them".

Norris stood trial at the Old Bailey. After the judge's summing up, but before the jury had been sent out, one of Norris's escorts was approached by the foreman and told the verdict would be not guilty.

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SUSPECTS



GARY DOBSON was 17 when he was arrested with two knives and a CS spray at his home. Acquitted in the private prosecution, although he gave police conflicting stories. There is now some doubt he took part in the attack.

"Others may have been directly or indirectly involved or able to give useful information. They needed to be thoroughly investigated and eliminated, particularly since the group was thought to have been greater in number than the initial four suspects."

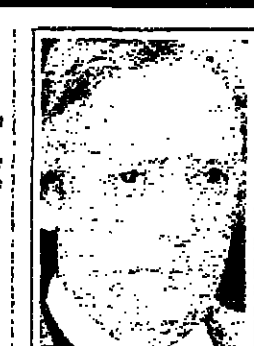
WITNESS



DUWAYNE BROOKS then 18, was the main murder witness. A close friend of Stephen, he was at the bus stop with him but his evidence was rejected as flawed by an Old Bailey judge. Later suffered post-traumatic stress.

"We are wholly convinced that he bears no responsibility for anything that has happened.... We do not believe that a young white man in a similar position, would have been dealt with in the same way."

JUDGE/LAWYERS



SIR WILLIAM MACPHERSON 72, a former High Court judge, became chairman of the inquiry. He angrily refused calls from the Lawrence family to step down because of alleged insensitivity on race issues and proved a tough inquisitor to all sides.

MICHAEL MANSFIELD, QC 57, is one of the leading criminal defence lawyers in the country with a left-wing leaning. Represented the family throughout the case and repeatedly challenged police at the inquiry for incompetence, racism and corruption. Police also accused him of encouraging the private prosecution.



IMRAM KHAN is a partner in an East London solicitors' firm with a feisty reputation on police and ethnic cases. Called in as adviser to the family.

"Overall there is no doubt but that Mr Khan has supported Mr & Mrs Lawrence with determination and with vigour. Both he and they have been proved right."

Police work incompetent and biased

Michael Harvey reports on the step-by-step analysis of how the murder inquiry failed

THE police investigation was riven by fundamental errors at every level and in every aspect, the inquiry concludes. Professional incompetence, institutionalised racism and a failure of leadership by senior officers was compounded by a flawed review which singularly failed to expose the inadequacies.

By the time a second investigation was opened in 1994, the faults of the first investigation could not be remedied. "Only now at this inquiry have they been laid bare."

First aid

After Stephen was stabbed twice, he collapsed bleeding heavily from the wounds in his chest and shoulder. First on the scene was an off-duty police officer, PC James Geddis, who made sure an ambulance had been called. When PC Linda Bethel and PC Anthony Gleason arrived, they failed to check what Stephen's injuries were. "Nobody did anything whatsoever for Stephen Lawrence except the small amount of testing to see whether he was still breathing and whether his pulse was beating," the report said.

The actions of Inspector Steven Groves, who was first in charge of the scene, were woefully inadequate. "He simply took it for granted that someone junior was appropriately in charge of Stephen."

Initial response

The whole way the police responded to the crime in the critical first few hours was "abysmal". Not a single officer made a log of what happened or of the crime scene, and the lack of organisation and control was astonishing.

Inspector Groves had under his control about 40 officers but no house-to-house searches were made of relevant addresses in the direction where the youths were seen to run.

At the hospital

Stephen was pronounced dead at the hospital shortly after 11pm. Inspector Ian Little met his parents there and was "grossly insensitive and unsympathetic" to them. "This was unwitting racism at work."

The first investigation

Detective Superintendent Ian Crampton was the senior investigating officer for the first three days after the murder.

The report found that revealing detailed information about the five suspects reached him and his team in that time. A reliable informer who knew the suspects personally gave officers explicit details about the gang and their love of knives. There was no wall of silence. But Mr Crampton made a "vital and fundamental mistake" in failing to arrest the suspects quickly.

Searches of the suspects' houses could have been made and vital clues recovered. Rigorous interviews of the teenagers in the immediate aftermath of the crime might have proved successful.

Detective superintendent Brain Weeden, who took over the inquiry, "perpetuated the wrong decisions made in the vital early days." Despite no real further developments, he arrested the suspects on May 7. The report concluded this was dictated mostly by "outside pressures", such as the highly publicised visit by Nelson Mandela.

Det Insp Benjamin Bullock, the deputy senior investigating officer worked long hours but failed to process information adeqately.

He failed to appreciate the need to try to arrest Clifford Norris, father of the suspect David Norris and a much-feared criminal in the Eltham area, or to follow up on witnesses who appeared to be intimidated.

The red Astra

Detectives failed to trace a red Vauxhall Astra seen twice on the night of the murder. The white youths in the car appeared to be laughing. By chance an officer saw the car again on April 30 and questioned the occupants. It was another week before anyone was interviewed. The questioning led nowhere.

Surveillance

The incompetence of a surveillance operation on the house where the Acourts lived left the inquiry members "aghast".

Before a camera could be set up, a young white man was seen leaving with clothing in a black bin liner. The investigating team were not told until the next day as the surveillance team had no means of communication with it.

Next day a police photographer took pictures of Jamie Acourt leaving with a bin liner full of clothes. Again no communication could be made or Mr Acourt intercepted. "This operation was ill-planned, badly carried out and inadequately documented."

Other failings

Officers failed to eliminate associates of the five suspects and in particular omitted to hunt a sixth blond-haired suspect. Identity parades attended by Duwayne Brooks and other witnesses were mishandled badly.

Searches of the suspects' houses were inadequate. Witnesses said that knives were hidden under floorboards. "There is no evidence that a single floorboard was removed during any of the searches."

Family liaison

One of the saddest and most regrettable parts of the case was the family liaison between the police and the Lawrences. Det Sgt John Bevan and Det Con Linda Holden did not achieve a good relationship with the family and Mr Bevan was not prepared to admit that the murder was purely a racist crime. The two officers treated the family in a cavalier and patronising way.

When Mrs Lawrence handed a list of suspects to Det Chief Supt William Isley, who had overall responsibility for the CID investigation, including family liaison, he folded up the piece of paper and put it in his pocket, giving the appearance of dismissing the help offered.

The report concluded: "Inappropriate behaviour and patronising attitudes towards this black family were the product of unwitting racism at work."

The Barker review

A review of the investigation in July 1993 under Det Chief Supt John Barker was an "indefensible" whitewash and factually inaccurate. Conclusions about the Lawrences were insensitive and thoughtless.



'Nobody did anything whatsoever for Stephen Lawrence except the small amount of testing to see whether he was still breathing'

ALAN WELLER



Duwayne Brooks yesterday: racism allowed police to treat me like a suspect, he said

Distraught friend was treated as a stereotype

By Daniel McGrory and Richard Duce

DUWAYNE BROOKS, the best friend of Stephen Lawrence, who was with him when he was attacked, was a victim of "racial stereotyping" by police on the night they investigated the stabbing.

The report criticises officers at the scene, and those who later questioned him, for the way they treated him. Mr Brooks complained that he was made to feel like a suspect.

He felt the police assumed there must have been a fight before Stephen was stabbed, and objected to officers asking for his photograph which they wanted to show to witnesses.

The report concludes: "We are driven to the conclusion that Mr Brooks was stereotyped as a young, black man exhibiting unpleasant hostility and agitation, who could not be expected to help, and whose condition and status simply did not need further examination or understanding.

"We believe that Mr Brooks's colour and such stereotyping played their part in the collective failure of those involved to treat him properly and according to his needs.

"We do not believe that a young white man in a similar position would have been dealt with in the same way."

The report exonerates Mr Brooks from blame in the incident that led to the attack and the failure of the court case.

Mr Brooks, then an 18-year-old college student, "was plainly fortunate to have escaped unharmed physically". The report says that seeing his best friend killed and the way he was treated by police has left him traumatised, which is why doctors said he should not be called as a witness at the inquiry.

Mr Brooks last night said the only honourable course for Sir Paul Condone was to resign . "When Mr Condon took up the job in 1991 he said that he would eradicate racism.

"Today is 1999 and racism is still here and has played a big part in this case and in many others. For Jack Straw to say that Mr Condon should stay is totally wrong."

Mr Brooks, now 24, and working as an engineer, said that while the Macpherson report was flawed in some areas he was relieved at the conclusion that racism was institutionalised within the police force.

"Racism killed my best friend Stephen. Racism also stopped officers from administering first aid whilst he was lying on the pavement. Racism also allowed the officers investigating this case to treat me like a suspect."

Police should not be allowed to investigate themselves, he said. "As long as they do why should I and other black people trust them?"

Echoes of Scarman — but forces have made progress

Peter RIDDELL ON POLITICS

THE Macpherson report is eerily familiar. Just read Lord Scarman's report on the Brixton disorders of 1981. This contained long passages about evidence of racial prejudice among some police officers in an area only a few miles from where Stephen Lawrence was murdered, and Macpherson refers back to the Scarman analysis several times. "It is therefore essential that every possible step be taken to prevent and root out racially prejudiced attitudes in the police service. This can be done through careful checks in the recruitment of officers, through training, through supervision and disciplinary arrangements."

So has nothing changed? Of course, both the circumstances and the conclusions of the two reports differ substantially. Indeed, Lord Scarman argued that: "'Institutional racism' does not exist in Britain: but racial disadvantage and its nasty associate racial discrimination, have not yet been eliminated. They poison minds and attitudes: they are, and so long as they remain, will continue to be, a potent factor of unrest."

The exercise has shown yet again both the strengths and limitations of such judicial inquiries. Every time there is a disaster or outrageous killing, an inquiry is set up, usually chaired by a distinguished judge. The discontents of the local community are poured out and the authorities concerned are found wanting. The criticisms and recommendations are invariably accepted by the Government. Everyone says that lessons have been learnt, legislation follows and the world is supposed to be a better place.

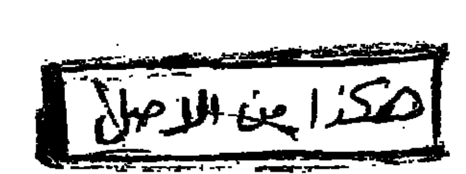
Over the past two decades there have been judicial inquiries or tribunals on the King's Cross Underground fire of November 1987, the Piper Alpha explosion of July 1988, the Clapham Junction rail accident of December 1988 and the Dunblane shooting of March 1996. These well-publicised reports have led to changes: new safety regulations and rules for employees, and, in the case of Dunblane, far-reaching controls on the possession of firearms.

In the world of politics, the cash-for-questions affair led to the creation of the Nolan Committee on Standards in Public Life which has changed the regulation and outside interests of MPs. The trickiest areas involve everyday behaviour and attitudes. High-minded judges, politicians and senior police officers can deplore racially prejudiced behaviour, institute training and new guidelines, but there is a big gap with day-to-day operations on the ground? Will the bitter pessimism expressed last night by Doreen Lawrence about the continuing threat to black boys on the streets be justified?

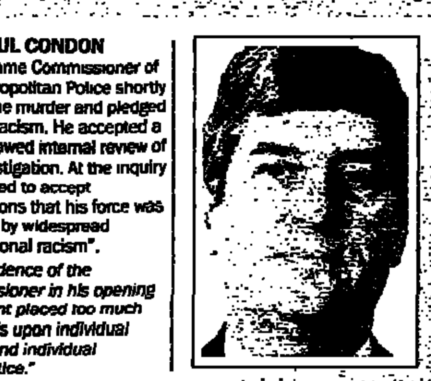
The evidence from Scarman and other reports into police and race relations is that improvements do happen. Many of Scarman's recommendations have been implemented — on, for instance, the training of police — while most senior police officers appear to be more racially sensitive. But this was clearly not enough either to change the behaviour of *some* more junior officers, as the Macpherson report makes clear, or to dispel the fears of many black people. Even in the years since the murder of Stephen Lawrence, the Metropolitan Police has done a lot to tackle racial prejudice, notably under impressive officers like John Grieve.

But the key issue is what has now become known as "canteen culture". Will the soul-searching result from the Macpherson report lead to a defensive reaction by the police, making the streets less safe for people of all races? The Scarman report warned of the danger of "slipping into an enclosed fortress of inward thinking and social isolation". That remains the main question about the follow-up to the Macpherson report.



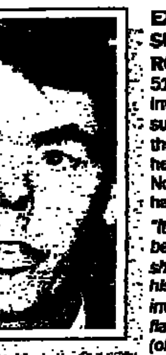


THE LAWRENCE REPORT: POLICE

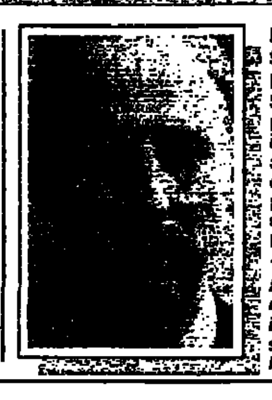


SIR PAUL CONDON
52, became Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police shortly before the murder and pledged to fight racism. He accepted a fatally flawed internal review of the investigation. At the inquiry he refused to accept suggestions that his force was infected by widespread "institutional racism".
"The evidence of the Commissioner in his opening statement placed too much emphasis upon individual racists and individual malpractice."

EX-DEPUTY ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DAVID OSLAND
was one of the most senior officers in southeast London and ordered the review into the murder case. He also later advised officers to sue the Lawrences for libel and became a Tory councillor.
"He was much too ready to accept that things were going satisfactorily during the course of the investigation. Mr Osland's attitude to Mr and Mrs Lawrence and their solicitor is reprehensible."



EX-DETECTIVE CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT RODNEY BARKER
51, carried out a review of the investigation and rejected any suggestion it was below par. At the inquiry Sir William said that he was an unreliable witness. Now retired, he would otherwise have faced disciplinary charges.
"It is apparent to us that because of the self-imposed shackles which he placed upon his consideration of the investigation he produced a flawed and indefensible Review (of the Lawrence case)."



EX-DETECTIVE CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT BILL ILSLEY
54, was a veteran London policeman who oversaw the investigation. He was accused by Mrs Lawrence of screwing up a piece of paper with the names of suspects she gave to him. He retired in March 1995.
"There was in our opinion failure to supervise and to manage effectively and imaginatively this highly sensitive murder investigation."



EX-DETECTIVE SUPERINTENDENT IAN CRAMPTON
55, was in charge of the investigation for the first three days. Took decision not to make early arrests despite tip-offs but told the inquiry information about witnesses did not reach him. Retired in 1995.
"Mr Crampton says that he made a 'strategical' decision not to arrest... This flawed decision as to arrest is fundamental. Its consequences are plain to see."

SIMON BROOKE-WEBB

The toughest verdict for a hard judge

Frances Gibb looks at the old-fashioned judge who has proved his critics wrong



Sir William arriving at Elephant and Castle for the inquiry. He was "not exactly up to date with racial awareness training", a lawyer said

WHEN Sir William Macpherson of Cluny was named as the chairman of the inquiry, the Lawrence family condemned him as the wrong man. The gritty, old-fashioned Scottish judge, a former lieutenant-colonel with the 21st SAS Territorials, was the very epitome of the establishment figure they did not want.

The family complained to the Home Secretary that the record of the former High Court judge with a hardline conservative reputation had dashed their confidence. They cited his past rulings: one in which he had held that a white parent could withdraw a child from a class with a large number of Asian children, even if her decision was motivated by racism. Another time he had argued that racial discrimination should not be tackled by the law but by "goodwill and good sense".

Sir William, 72, also had one of the worst records for refusing applications for judicial review challenges in such cases as immigration.

But despite their protests, Sir William remained in place, alongside the three inquiry members appointed with him, with the Home Secretary's backing. Yesterday's report is a clear vindication of his appointment, on the recommendation of the Lord Chancellor.

One senior judge commented: "If you wanted a whitewash job, then Sir William is not the person you would have appointed." His critics completely underestimated the nature of the man, the way that — slow to reach a view — he would expose himself over many months to evidence which, drip by drip, would change what might have been his natural inclinations.

His judicial colleagues knew better. They have always regarded him as as firm but fair, a man "of the utmost integrity and probity". One senior judge said: "He will say it exactly as he finds it. Nothing will put him off."

In the first instance, though, the attacks served to put him on notice. "It really laid down a marker," one lawyer said. "I think he was a bit rattled by all this criticism being thrown at him before the inquiry opened." While none of this would have forced him into conclusions he otherwise would not have reached, it might have heightened his sensitivity to the issues. One barrister said: "It would be strange if he had not been affected by that, and also by having most pressure groups and the race-relations industry, if you like, watching his every move, coupled with the attentions of the world media."

So in his handling of the inquiry, Sir William was even more determined to prove his evenhandedness. Finding himself under attack for a perceived inability to be impartial, he appeared to lean over backwards to be fair, more than fair, towards the Lawrence family — evident in his sympathetic treatment of Mrs Lawrence when under questioning.

The result, said some observers, was that if anyone felt aggrieved at the end, it was the police, not the Lawrences.

His ultra-establishment background gives some clue as to why Sir William was regarded as the most unlikely choice. A Scot who carved his legal career at the English legal profession, he was regarded as an excellent judge but in the old school and not — as one lawyer put it — "exactly up to date with racial awareness training". When he was piped out with bagpipes on the day he retired from the High Court bench, Lord Justice Leggatt said he was "not famous for his lenient sentences".

The son of a brigadier, Sir William was educated at Wellington College and Trinity College, Oxford (interrupted by four years in the Scots Guards). On the death of his father in 1969 he became 27th chief of the Macpherson clan. He is also a member of the exclusive Royal Company of Archers, a ceremonial guard for the Queen in Scotland.

The law was his second choice of career: he first tried unsuccessfully for the Diplomatic Service. He was called to the Bar in 1952 and ten years later married Sheila McDonald Brodie. They have two sons and a daughter.

He played rugby and also enjoyed parachuting into Denmark, Norway and France on TA exercises. In 1971 he took silk, then became a High Court judge in 1983 and was involved in many high-profile cases during 13 years on the bench before retiring in 1996.

Despite the cases raised by the Lawrences, he has won plaudits from some victims for sensitive handling. Five years ago at Newcastle Crown Court he presided at the trial of Robert Black, accused of the kidnap and murder of three young girls. He sought to ensure relatives were not in court for distressing evidence.

And during the inquiry itself he appeared genuinely shocked at the catalogue of police incompetence, as well as moved by the family's plight. When the judge visited the scene of Stephen Lawrence's death in March last year he spoke in emotive language about the murder and referred to the recent vandalism of a memorial stone to the teenager as an "unspeakable act".

Nowadays he spends his retirement time at home in Scotland, the 16th century Newton Castle, Blairgowrie, and is said to have been grumpy on occasions at having to leave to travel back to London.

The strength of the findings are a reflection of his determination to give the inquiry his best shot. They also indicate an open-mindedness and readiness to listen, particularly to the three other inquiry members who are believed to have been strongly influential in shaping the final report. But Sir William has not just toed the line. He goes along with their views. "He is not the sort of man just to grit his teeth and say something for the sake of it," one barrister said. "If he had not taken the findings on board, it would have gnawed at his being."

So, a tough verdict, in line with his hard-judge reputation, was always on the cards, one way or the other. It can claim to be his toughest verdict yet.

THE JUDGE'S RECOMMENDATIONS

These are the recommendations in summary:

Openness, accountability and the restoration of confidence

☐ The report recommends that as a matter of ministerial priority, all police services must take steps "to increase trust and confidence in policing among minority ethnic communities".

The Home Office should set performance indicators. These would include strategies for the prevention, recording, investigation and prosecution of racist incidents; public satisfaction surveys to assess all ethnic groups; racism awareness training; policy directives governing stop and search procedures; levels of recruitment and retention of ethnic minority recruits; levels of racist behaviour or attitude and their outcomes.

The overall aim would be "the elimination of racist prejudice and disadvantage and the demonstration of fairness in all aspects of policing".

☐ Her Majesty's Inspectors of Constabulary (HMIC) should be given full powers to inspect all parts of police services. The Metropolitan Police Service should be inspected forthwith "in order to restore public confidence".

☐ An organisation similar to the schools inspectorate Ofsted, should be set up to inspect police services to improve standards and quality through regular inspection, public reporting and independent advice.

☐ Greater links should be made with the local community by ensuring that the membership of local police authorities reflects where possible the local cultural and ethnic mix. The report also suggests that the Metropolitan Police Authority should be given the power to appoint all chief officers of the Metropolitan Police Service in line with the powers of other police services.

☐ The HMIC should be empowered to recruit and use lay inspectors to examine and inspect police services particularly in connection with performance in investigating racist crime.

☐ Investigating reports resulting from public complaints should not attract public interest immunity and should be disclosed to complainants.

☐ A Freedom of Information Act should apply to all areas of policing and the race relations act should be extended. "The full force of the Race Relations legislation should apply to all police officers."

Definition and reporting of a racist incident

☐ The definition should be: "A racist incident is any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person." The term should include crimes and non-crimes in police terms and be reported, recorded and investigated.

☐ A code of practice should be established by the Home Office to create a system of reporting and recording all racist incidents — 24 hours a day and at locations other than police stations. There should be close co-operation with the police services and local government departments to ensure that all information on racist incidents is shared.

Police practice and the investigation of racist crime

☐ The Association of Chief Police Officers should devise codes of practice to govern reviews of investigation of crime, in order to ensure open and thorough reviews. These reviews could be done by external police services.

☐ Metropolitan Police Service procedures at the scene of incidents should be reviewed to ensure co-operation between uniformed and CID officers. The Met should ensure adequate recording and retention of information by individual officers and specialist units.

Family liaison, victims and witnesses

☐ The police services should ensure they have designated and trained family liaison officers. Training should include racism awareness and cultural diversity so that families are treated with respect. These officers should have a duty to provide the victim's family with all possible information about the crime and investigation. Any family requests not acceded to and any family complaints should be formally recorded and reported to a senior officers.

☐ The police services should develop with the Home Office guidelines on handling victims and witnesses, particularly in regard to racist incidents. The police services should also work with victim support services to help in the handling of sensitive witnesses.

Prosecution of racist crimes

☐ The standard of proof should remain unchanged.

☐ Police services and the Crown Prosecution Service should ensure that particular care is taken at all stages of prosecution to recognise and to include reference to any evidence of racist motivation. No "plea bargaining" should ever be allowed to exclude such evidence.

☐ The CPS should ensure that all decisions to discontinue a prosecution should be recorded and disclosed to victim and family in most cases.

☐ "Consideration should be given to amendment of the law to allow prosecution of offences of racist language or behaviour, and of offences involving the possession of offensive weapons, where such conduct can be proved to have taken place other than in public place".

☐ Victims or victims' families should be allowed to become "civil parties" to criminal proceedings to ensure that they are provided with all relevent information. Consideration should be given to providing legal aid to victims and families to cover representation at an inquest.

Training

☐ There should be an immediate review and revision of racism awareness training within police services.

☐ All police officers, including CID and civilian staff, should be trained in racism awareness and valuing cultural diversity. This should include practical experience in the field of racial awareness which should involve local minority ethnic communities. Training in racism awareness should also be extended to local government and other agencies including other sections of the criminal justice system.

Employment, discipline and complaints

☐ The Home Secretary's proposals to changes to the police disciplinary and complaints procedures should be fully implemented.

☐ Police services should implement a code of conduct to ensure that racist words or acts "proved to have been done by officers should lead to disciplinary proceedings and that it should be understood that such conduct should usually merit dismissal".

☐ The Home Secretary should take steps to ensure that serious complaints against police officers are independently investigated.

☐ The Home Office should review and monitor the system and standards of police services applied to the selection and promotion of officers of the rank of inspector and above.

Stop and search

☐ The Home Secretary should ensure that police officers make a record of all stops and "stops and searches" made under any legislative provision. The records should include reason for the stop, the outcome, and the self-defined ethnic identity of the person stopped. A copy of the record should be given to the person stopped.

Recruitment and retention

☐ The Home Secretary and police authorities' policing plans should include targets for recruitment and progression of ethnic minority staff.

Prevention and the role of education

☐ Consideration should be given to amending the national curriculum aimed at preventing racial prejudice and fostering cultural diversity.

☐ Local education authorities and school governors should ensure that schools record all racist incidents and that all recorded incidents are reported to the pupils' parents. The number of incidents should be published annually on a school-by-school basis.

☐ Ofsted inspections should monitor these strategies.

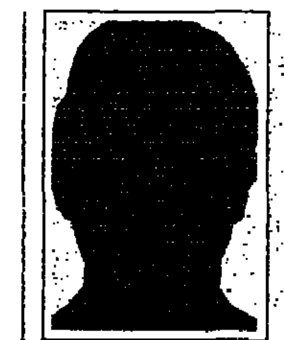




THE LAWRENCE REPORT: POLICE



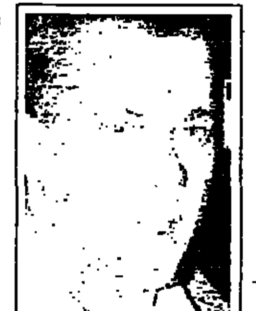
EX-DETECTIVE SUPERINTENDENT BRIAN WEEDEN
58, took over from Mr Crampton and was in charge for 18 months. He did not meet the Lawrences for a year. Told the inquiry he was confused about the legal grounds he needed to arrest suspects. Retired in 1995 after 30 years service.
"His decisions and actions show lack of imagination and a tendency simply to allow things to drift. He failed to address with sensitivity the problems of family liaison."



DETECTIVE INSPECTOR BEN BULLOCK
49, became the second in command of the investigation. He faces seven charges of neglect of duty after deciding to halt his retirement plans and face a disciplinary hearing.
"He failed to process properly vital information given to the team by James Grant. He was often passive, and not up to his job."



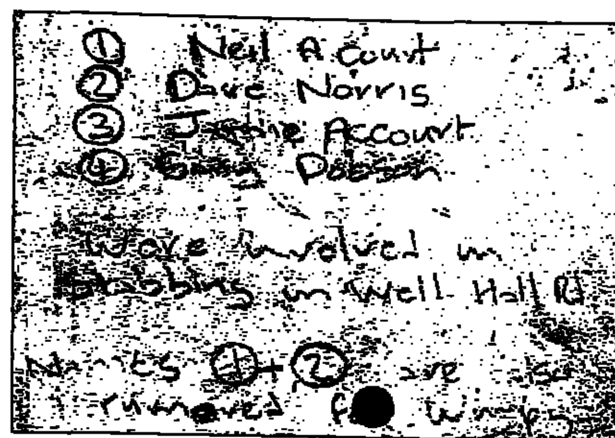
INSPECTOR STEVEN GROVES
was in charge of a police unit called to the murder scene. Told the inquiry he thought Duwayne Brooks might be a suspect.
"It is apparent to all of us that the direction and control exercised by Mr Groves at the scene was almost non-existent."



WPC LINDA BETHEL
was one of the first officers on the scene of the murder. It was alleged by Mr Brooks that she ignored information he gave her and asked if he was carrying a weapon. Did not give first aid to Stephen Lawrence.
"Mr Brooks was the victim of racist stereotyping... the evidence does show how racist stereotyping can develop."

PC ANTHONY GLEASON
was with WPC Bethell. Did not give first aid and allegedly did not circulate a description given by Mr Brooks. Denied being insensitive to the Lawrence family at the hospital.
"We have to conclude that no officer dealt properly at the scene with Mr Brooks.... PC Gleason said that Mr Brooks was 'Highly excitable. Virtually uncontrollable'. Considering what Mr Brooks had seen and been involved in none of that should have been surprising."

Suspects 'the type to commit this crime'



This note, reproduced in the Macpherson report, had been placed on the windscreen of a police car after the murder



Above: Schooldays at Crown Woods in Eltham: the school was attended by Gary Dobson, who was acquitted of murder; right, the video which, Sir William found, showed "revolting racism"

The five were found to be arrogant and dismissive towards the inquiry, reports **Michael Harvey**

THE five young men suspected of Stephen Lawrence's murder were "the type of people who could have committed a crime of this type", the report concluded, but evidence had not emerged during the inquiry that proved their involvement.

The report based its conclusion on the appearance of the five before the inquiry and the video evidence, covertly obtained by police, of the gang displaying "violent racism at its worst". The report said: "The suspects were then and certainly before late 1994 infected and invaded by gross and revolting racism.

"The press and public cannot be blamed for voicing the suspicions about them which are current and which will remain alive because nobody has been convicted of the brutal racist murder of Stephen Lawrence," the report said.

In 1995 the Lawrence family began a private prosecution for murder against the five, three of whom were acquitted at the Old Bailey the following year after the judge ruled certain evidence inadmissible; charges against the other two had already been dropped because of insufficient evidence. The family had begun the prosecution after the Crown Prosecution Service said there was insufficient evidence to support a case against two who had been charged in 1993.

In his report, Sir William Macpherson of Cluny is scathing about the appearance of the five at the inquiry last June: "To say that they gave evidence would be to dignify their appearance. They all relied upon alleged lack of memory. They showed themselves to be arrogant and dismissive," he says.

But the report did not propose that they be prosecuted for perjury, something which had been thought to be a possibility. "Our own judgment, supported by legal advice, is that such a prosecution should not be proposed by this inquiry. Their evidence was evasive and vague but that does not mean it would be possible to prove that they were lying in the factual answers given.

"If the view of others differs from ours the matter can be reported to the police," the report added.

The central figures in the gang are Neil Acourt and his brother Jamie, and David Norris. The Acourt brothers were aged 17 and 16 on the day of the murder, in 1993, and David Norris was also 16. Norris's father is Clifford Norris, a notorious South London criminal who was on the run in connection with drug-dealing.

The other two members of the gang are Gary Dobson, who was 17 at the time of the murder, and Luke Knight who was 16.

These five were the prime suspects and while other names have surfaced in the information reaching the police, these have been singled out.

Four of the youths lived on or near the Brook Estate near the scene of the crime, in Eltham, southeast London, while David Norris, who knew the other four through school and family connections, lived in Chislehurst, Kent.

The Macpherson report says that the Acourts in particular modellled themselves on the Krays and were known for their racist hatred and love of knives. Various members of the gang had been involved in up to a dozen attacks and assaults in the months before the murder.

On the night of the murder, Dobson left his home, a short distance from Well Hall Road where Stephen was stabbed, at about 11.45pm. He called at the Acourts' house. One witness stated that he had seen the Acourts and David Norris near the scene of the murder.

The video camera covertly installed in a flat rented by Dobson in 1994 showed their sickening racist violence but did not add "one iota" to the evidence in respect of the murder charges.

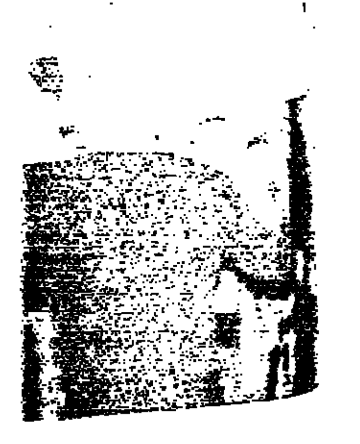
Throughout the police investigation and at the inquest into Stephen's death the five suspects have given the barest minimum of help to police and the authorities. At the inquest in 1997 none of them gave any evidence; they claimed "privilege" on the grounds that they might incriminate themselves.

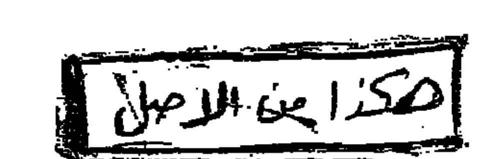
At the Macpherson inquiry the suspects all entered the witness box last June and answered questions under oath or affirmation. They were forced to accept that numerous weapons had been found both at the Acourts' home and elsewhere. A lethal hammerhead suspended from a strap was found under some clothing in David Norris's bedroom.

The report said that Dobson gave only a specious explanation when a large knife was recovered from his girlfriend's bedroom. A sword found under cushions at the Acourts' house was said by them to be for decorative purposes.

The five had made sure that they did not have to answer any direct questions about their involvement in the murder, after going to the High Court to try to avoid attending the inquiry.

Before the inquiry began Sir William had said that if evidence emerged that made it possible to indicate that the suspects were involved in the murder, the inquiry would not hesitate to do so. But the report concluded: "No such evidence has come before us. The situation remains as it was. These youths remain the five suspects, but nothing more than this is proved against them upon the evidence."





Both sides stick to their guns in Kosovo impasse

By Anthony Loyd in Pristina and Michael Binyon, diplomatic editor


GORAN TOMASEVIC / REUTERS

Serb women in Bukos, 21 miles north of Pristina, grieve yesterday for Mirko Milosevic who was killed in front of his house three days ago

ROBIN COOK, the Foreign Secretary, said yesterday that the 17 days of talks on Kosovo without an agreement "has not ended in a fudge, because it has not ended".

But he insisted that the "great majority" of issues between the Serbs and Albanians were resolved at Rambouillet, and that the failure to reach complete agreement demonstrated the "extra mile" still to be travelled.

Mr Cook told Parliament that a "peace process" had been created and the end of the Rambouillet talks, near Paris, did not mean the end of the road. But he admitted that violent conflict was still going on, and warned both the Serbs and Kosovan Albanians that Nato remained ready to take action.

But there was no question of the allies providing ground troops without a clear commitment by both sides to a ceasefire. The Serbs and Albanians should use the next three weeks to build on the new agreement for peace, not to break down the existing ceasefire agreement, Mr Cook said.

"Neither side is going to end this conflict through military action," he said. "Neither side can gain from prolonging it."

Yet, within hours of the closure of talks, both Serb and Albanian delegations sought to distance themselves from the provisional and unsigned accord, leaving the fate of Kosovo hanging in the balance of a mythical ceasefire for the next three weeks until the planned resumption of negotiations in France.

President Milutinovic of Serbia called Mr Cook's conclusions "a camouflage for failure", while Hashim Thaci, a key ethnic Albanian representative at Rambouillet and head of the Kosovo Liberation Army's political directorate, emphasised that he "did not sign any kind of agreement" and added: "I invite the people of Kosovo for unity and resistance, to strengthen the fight of the Kosovo Liberation Army."

If the Contact Group's carrot of proposed autonomy had failed to blunt the Albanians' appetite for full independence, then the stick of Nato with which the West hoped to coerce the Serbs was left idle, with the alliance's troops and equipment straddling ports from Germany to Greece; the deadline threat of airstrikes having been first delayed, then extended, and now apparently forgotten.

Mr Cook would do well to remember his reference to "fudges" and his repeated reference to a "red line" ceasefire agreement by which the Yugoslav security forces are supposed to have abided since October last year.

Then, in a deal signed by President Milosevic of Yugoslavia and Richard Holbrooke, the US special envoy, it was stipulated that all Serbian Army and police units were required to withdraw from Kosovo or return to barracks, or face Nato airstrikes. A 2,000-strong Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe verification mission was sent into the province to monitor the Serbs' compliance with this deal, while Nato launched an air operation in a similar task. But, in the ensuing period, both the Serb security forces and the KLA, who never officially signed up to anything, have consistently ignored the October agreement, while the West has sat back and "fudged" its own accountability to the deal.

Meanwhile, 50,000 more civilians have been forced by fighting to flee their homes since December 24, more than two months after the Holbrooke-Milosevic accord. Abductions and attacks continue throughout on a daily basis.

As the talks in France ended on Tuesday, Javier Solana, the Secretary-General of Nato, repeated calls for both sides to "respect the ceasefire and refrain from all provocations". In Brussels, a Nato official said the alliance was "totally ready to respond to any deteriorating situation in Kosovo which would mark the return to massive, all-out violence".

But William Walker, head of the OSCE verification mission in Pristina, said: "The ceasefire is a bit of a joke. Both sides are going out of their way to engage the other side, and that invites a comeback. It's almost easier to list places where they are in compliance — it's a short list."

☐ **Pristina:** Setting aside deep mistrust that has hampered their efforts to press for independence, the KLA and the pacifist Albanian factions yesterday announced that they would form a coalition provisional government to pursue their goal. *(AP)*

Louvre 'is easier to rob than a store'

From Susan Bell in Paris

OFFICIALS at the Louvre have admitted that security at the museum is so poor that it would be easier for a thief to steal one of its 32,000 exhibits than it would be to take an item from a department store.

The admission came as independent security experts delivered a damning report, criticising the lack of anti-theft controls at the museum and advising that the Louvre needs to spend Fr150 million (£15 million) to bring its security up to standard. The 300-page document was commissioned by the Louvre's director, Pierre Rosenberg, last June.

Its findings have increased speculation that the museum will be forced to raise its entry price to help to pay for the additional controls.

The investigation into security was triggered by the theft last May of a valuable painting by the 19th-century artist Camille Corot. Despite 900 security cameras and the presence of more than 200 guards, the thief succeeded in stealing *Le Chemin de Sèvres* on a busy Sunday afternoon while hundreds of visitors were touring the museum, leaving behind the frame and the glass protection plate.

The painting, which was insured for Fr8 million, is 13in. by 19in. and small enough to be slipped into a bag or large coat. Investigators continue to monitor sales at Sotheby's and Christie's but say they have virtually given up hope of recovering the painting. The task of safeguarding the thousands of exhibits displayed in 400 galleries and visited by six million people each year is not eased by the layout of the 800-year-old buildings.

"The space is extremely difficult to guard, because the Louvre is a former royal palace and was not designed as a museum. One of the main problems is that there are so many nooks and crannies," said Christophe Monin, its communications director.

While François Mitterrand's Fr6 billion project to restore and expand the Louvre has given Paris I.M. Pei's celebrated steel-and-glass pyramid and doubled the museum's exhibition space, the creation of a co-ordinated security system seems to have slipped through the planners' net.

Experts devising the new security plans for the Louvre are working on an anti-theft device, similar to those used in supermarkets and department stores, which would set off an alarm as soon as an exhibit was removed.



A Berlin victim and one of his mourners

10,000 Kurds march in Berlin

From Tony Paterson in Berlin and Richard Owen in Istanbul

MORE than 10,000 Kurds held a funeral march in the centre of Berlin yesterday to mourn three activists shot dead by Israeli security guards on Wednesday last week during violent protests over the arrest of Abdullah Ocalan, the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) leader.

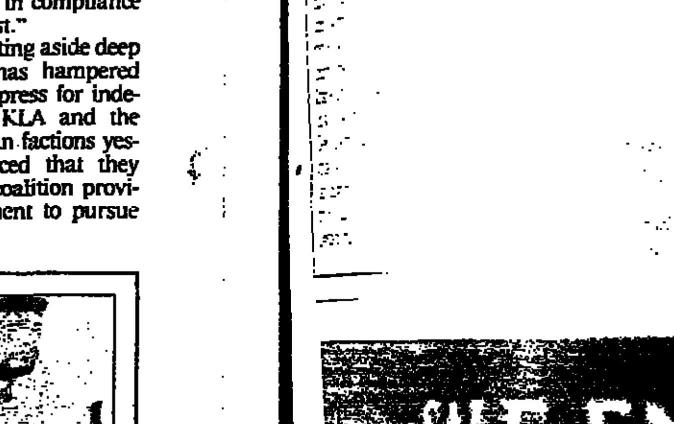
The four-hour procession was led by hearses bearing the bodies of the Kurds, killed while trying to storm the city's Israeli Consulate.

Fears of renewed violence prompted German police to mount a 3,500-strong guard, but they were involved only in brief scuffles after a group of Kurds attempted to storm a building occupied by Turks who had pelted the procession with objects from an upstairs window. Police had earlier arrested 47 protesters caught taking iron bars and clubs to the march.

Germany's Federal Prosecutors' Office disclosed yesterday that it was considering reclassifying the PKK as a "terrorist organisation", a measure that would make surveillance easier. The organisation, already banned, is estimated to have 50,000 sympathisers in Germany alone.

Meanwhile, Turkish officials said that "preliminary legal proceedings" had begun in the trial of Mr Ocalan after Tuesday's hearing, when he was formally charged with treason.

☐ Athens: Greece has put its defence forces on high alert after Turkish statements denouncing it for sheltering Mr Ocalan at its Nairobi embassy. *(Reuters)*







Starr: both parties unhappy with post

Starr statute under review

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

CONGRESS began debating yesterday whether it ever wants to see the likes of Kenneth Starr again.

Hearings opened into whether the statute that enabled Mr Starr to recommend President Clinton's impeachment should be revised or scrapped when its term expires on June 30. The law was passed 21 years ago to prevent any repetition of Richard Nixon's infamous action when he sacked the Watergate prosecutor, Archibald Cox.

But the law has ballooned, giving independent prosecutors unlimited authority. Both parties have suffered. Republicans were scarred by Lawrence Walsh's six-year inquiry into the Reagan-era Iran-Contra scandal at a cost of $48 million (£30 million). Democrats are angry that Mr Starr's inquiries are continuing after nearly five years and a bill approaching $50 million.

US television airs Clinton 'rape' interview

FROM DAMIAN WHITWORTH IN WASHINGTON

AMERICANS were last night finally being given the chance to see and hear the woman who has accused President Clinton of raping her in a hotel room more than 20 years ago.

NBC television decided to air an explosive interview it has been sitting on for some weeks after the accusation, which has been circulating for years, was published in newspapers which had also been agonising over whether to run it.

Juanita Broaddrick, the owner of an Arkansas nursing home, has given a graphic account alleging that Mr Clinton assaulted her after inviting himself into her hotel room.

After a brief conversation, she claims, he forced her to have sexual intercourse and as he left told her to put some ice on her lip because he had bit it so hard it was swelling badly. The incident was alleged to have occurred in 1978, when Mr Clinton was Attorney-General in Arkansas and running for the governorship.

The story first emerged during Mr Clinton's 1992 campaign but was not reported by any major news organisation. Mrs Broaddrick, 55, denied any such encounter in an affidavit for the Paula Jones sexual harassment case and refused to speak last year when it emerged that Mrs Jones's lawyers had approached her.

She has since said that she had not wanted to get dragged into the case against the President. Kenneth Starr's investigators spoke to her but decided that her claims did not help his case that Mr Clinton had obstructed justice.

Eventually, however, she gave an interview more than a month ago to NBC. But as the network dragged its heels over showing it she became frustrated and told the story to *The Wall Street Journal*, a dogged enemy of Mr Clinton, which printed her allegations on its opinion pages.

The Times and other British papers as well as a few American publications carried accounts of the *Journal* report. *The Washington Post* admitted that it had had the story for some time but said that its interviews had been off the record and could not be used until Mrs Broaddrick went public elsewhere.

The New York Times, which ran the story yesterday, said that in 1992 it had originally regarded it as "the kind of toxic waste traditionally dumped just before election day". American papers have for the most part avoided the word "rape".

David Kendall, the President's personal lawyer, has denied Mrs Broaddrick's account. "Any allegation that the President assaulted Mrs Broaddrick more than 20 years ago is absolutely false," he said. "Beyond that, we are not going to comment."

Mrs Broaddrick told *The New York Times* yesterday that she had felt unable to bring a charge against Mr Clinton. "Even though I was a respected businesswoman, what was I doing in a hotel room with the Attorney-General? No. I never even considered coming forward."

Despite the sensational accusation, it seems unlikely to cause Mr Clinton any serious problems.



Juanita Broaddrick with Bill Clinton and a resident of her nursing home in 1978

Britain weighs army role in Africa

BY MICHAEL EVANS DEFENCE EDITOR

A BRITISH aid package is expected to be agreed with Sierra Leone which could include sending instructors to train a new army for the country.

After a meeting in Freetown this week between a five-man delegation from Britain's Joint Rapid Deployment Force and Ecomog, the Nigerian-led West African intervention force in Sierra Leone, ministers are to review a series of recommendations for providing military and civilian aid.

The British delegation was headed by Brigadier David Richards, commander of the Joint Rapid Deployment Force. He visited Sierra Leone a few weeks ago to make a preliminary assessment for ministers. The British team also consulted with the Sierra Leone defence force headquarters.

A spokesman for the Foreign Office confirmed yesterday that a British military team had been in Freetown this week and that a package of measures was to be considered. He said one option was to provide military assistance in developing an army in Sierra Leone. Brigadier Richards and his team are due back in London today.

President Kabbah, who was restored to power last year after being overthrown by renegade soldiers, dissolved the army. Ecomog troops are still fighting the rebels.

☐ **Monrovia:** Liberia accused a Briton, Richard Ratcliffe, and a Sierra Leonean of being mercenaries and ordered their deportation. They were linked to a Sierra Leone envoy. *(AFP)*

Mad cow ban leaves Spanish matadors short of bulls

FROM GILES TREMLETT IN MADRID

A BAN on fighting bulls infected with BSE being exported from Portugal has left Spain's *toreros* short of quality animals to kill this season.

Bulls raised on the grasslands of Portugal have long been a staple diet of the Spanish *corrida*. Nearly half the 1,500 bulls killed in Spanish bullrings last year came from Portugal.

But now Portugal's bulls are suspected of carrying bovine spongiform encephalopathy or mad cow disease. The European Union has banned the export of Portuguese cattle, including fighting bulls, until August at least.

Brussels has refused to bend to pleas from Portuguese breeders, many of them aristocratic owners of large estates, that fighting bulls be made an exception.

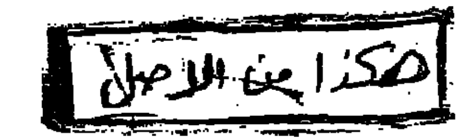
The problem for the breeders is that the meat of a fighting bull is considered a delicacy in Spain. A team of butchers dressed in blood-spattered white coats is present in the wings of most of the country's major bullrings.

Minutes after a defeated bull has been dragged out of the ring it is skinned and butchered. Sides of beef, piles of tripe and other cuts are dispatched to shops and restaurants.

Some butchers' shops, such as the Carniceria Aguirre near Madrid's Las Ventas bullring, even specialise in the meat of fighting bulls.

Fighting bulls live freely for most of their lives and receive a diet of cereals and forage in their final months to help to build weight.

Portugal's bull breeders claim that the nine-month ban will cost them more than £1 million.



Israel told to quit Lebanon

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

Claude and Tziona Balhasan grieve for their son, Eitan, at his funeral yesterday

CALLS for Israel to pull out from occupied south Lebanon have reached an emotional climax following this week's killing of three elite paratroop officers, bringing the number of Israeli deaths to 925 since troops crossed the border northwards in 1978.

Israel Radio reported last night that a new voluntary helpline for parents of soldiers serving in Lebanon had been inundated with calls since being opened a few days ago.

Gratzia Carmon, a psychologist helping to run the service, said that the main problem facing callers was the inability to sleep and the fear of a visit from the army to report the loss of a loved one.

Leading the calls for Israel to abandon the nine-mile-wide buffer zone, which it has held since the rest of its troops pulled back in 1985, was Claude Balhasan, the father of a 30-year-old paratroop commander killed in the early hours of Tuesday when he led his troops into an apparent ambush by Hezbollah, the Iranian-backed militia.

"I do not know what the Israel Defence Forces can do in Lebanon or what our soldiers are looking for — especially outside the security zone [where the fatal firefight took place]," said the father of Major Eitan Balhasan, who was buried yesterday in the Galilee.

Speaking in the immediate aftermath of the incident, the worst suffered by Israeli troops since 12 naval commandos were killed in a similar ambush in 1997, Mr Balhasan added: "Today I lost a son. The people of Israel lost an outstanding commander. Tomorrow, it could be someone else. It is a waste of time. We must get out of Lebanon."

The deaths and the five injuries in the same gun battle just north of the buffer zone in which all the Hezbollah fighters escaped has revived the long-standing argument over a possible unilateral withdrawal.

Yossi Beilin, a leading candidate for the main opposition Labour Party in the May general election, called on Moshe Arens, the new Defence Minister, to pull troops out of Lebanon immediately and to regroup along Israel's northern border.

Before attending yesterday's funeral, Mr Arens reiterated his opposition to any such move.

The pull-out campaign, likened to the movement to end the Vietnam War seen in the United States, received a significant boost yesterday in a rare front-page leading article by *Maariv*, the second biggest-selling Israeli newspaper.

Under the heading "Thirty Years War", Yaakov Erez, the editor-in-chief, voiced the desperation felt by many when he wrote: "We have been fighting in Lebanon for 30 years now. Thirty years of raids beyond the border far into terrorist territory. And almost nothing has changed. Once it was Palestinians we fought, today it is Hezbollah fighters.

"We have achieved nothing, we have not brought calm to the northern border, which at one time, 30 years ago, we used to call the quiet border. The reconnaissance unit commanders of then are now retired generals, the fighters of that time are sons of fighters from the Sixties and Seventies."

But the difficulties that will face whatever government wins the election were highlighted when Syria's official press poured scorn on a call by Binyamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister, urging Damascus to stop attacks by Hezbollah on Israeli troops in south Lebanon.

The *Tishrin* daily, the mouthpiece of President Assad of Syria, claimed that fighting the Israeli occupation was "a legitimate action", and advised Mr Netanyahu to withdraw his forces "to ensure real security for Israel".

Syria, the main power broker in Lebanon with some 35,000 troops, "will not submit to occupation and will use all its resources to liberate" the Golan Heights, occupied by Israel since 1967, as well as south Lebanon, it said.

MOHAMED ZATARI / AP



A child watches from behind barbed wire enclosing his home village of Arnoun, which was fenced off by Israeli troops because of suspected Hezbollah activity

US foils spate of Bin Laden bomb attacks

Global terrorist was thwarted by phone tapping, writes **Ian Brodie** in Washington

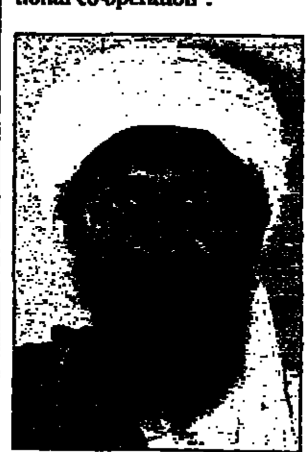
OSAMA BIN LADEN, the world's most wanted terrorist, has been foiled in at least seven attempted attacks on American outposts around the world since his involvement in bombing two US embassies in East Africa six months ago, according to Washington officials yesterday.

The thwarted vehicle bombings were plotted against six American embassies and the remote Prince Sultan Air Force Base in Saudi Arabia from which US aircraft patrol Iraq's southern no-fly zone.

The targeted embassies were in Albania, Azerbaijan, Ivory Coast, Tajikistan, Uganda and Uruguay. These embassies were chosen because they were housed in old buildings lacking modern security, according to *USA Today*.

Dozens of suspected bombers have been arrested. Until now, the US Government has said only that it prevented further attacks on two unnamed embassies, following the destruction of those in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam last August with the loss of nearly 240 lives.

Yesterday a senior administration official confirmed that bin Laden had been prevented from further attacks on US facilities around the world "thanks to a combination of good intelligence and international co-operation".



Bin Laden: $5 million reward for his capture

Bin Laden has been charged with the East African bombings in a US federal indictment. The US has offered a record reward of $5 million (£3.1 million) for his capture.

George Tenet, the CIA director, told Congress: "There is not the slightest doubt that bin Laden and his worldwide allies ... are planning further attacks against us."

American spy satellites tapping into bin Laden's phone calls from his hideout in Afghanistan were able to pick up details of the planned raids in time to prevent them.

Police arrested 20 suspects in Uganda last September. Last month, seven Afghans with Italian passports were picked up in Malaysia. An Egyptian couple and a Jordanian were stopped on the border between Uruguay and Brazil. The list of arrests shows the global spread of the hunt for bin Laden's allies.

Now there is a question mark over his precise whereabouts. Two weeks ago the Taleban Islamic fundamentalists who rule most of Afghanistan reported: "Our guest has gone missing. We did not order him to leave and we do not know where he has gone."

It is thought that he has left his camp and has moved north to a more remote region that may be in the hands of anti-Taleban rebels.

LINKS

http://www.state.gov/www/regions/africa/kenya_tanzania.html — US State Department report on the Kenyan and Tanzanian embassy bombings.

http://www.ict.org.il/articles/bin-ladin.htm — The International Policy Institute for Counter-Terrorism.

France's prestige warship all at sea

FROM SUSAN BELL IN PARIS

THE *Charles de Gaulle*, France's most sophisticated warship, is to remain in dry dock indefinitely it has been announced, after being forced to cancel sea trials four years later than originally planned because of technical problems.

The Fr19 billion (£1.9 billion) nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, which took ten years to build and was designed to be the flagship of the French Navy, is rapidly turning into a national embarrassment.

It was scheduled to enter operational service at the end of next year after construction delays of four years due to budgetary problems and contamination fears, which last November led to further insulation of its two reactors.

Naval faces were particularly red after the world's press was invited to see the carrier embark on a ten-day maiden voyage in the Atlantic last month to test its nuclear engines and stability. The exercise was postponed, however, because of 50mph winds. The effects of high winds on the hull are unknown and a navy spokesman said: "We cannot afford to take the slightest risk as the *Charles de Gaulle* has never been tested in this type of manoeuvre."

A second attempt a few days later saw the carrier forced to limp back into port within hours after one of its engines caught fire. More than three weeks later, technicians admit that they still do not know why the engines are not working normally. "It seems to be something to do with the ball bearings," an official said vaguely.

The ship, the world's most expensive floating airfield, can carry up to 40 planes and was built to replace the *Foch*.

Ghost voters haunt Nigeria democracy

Even as an African giant tries to rid itself of military rule, corruption endures, writes Sam Kiley in Abuja

DETERMINED to fix the election in his ward, but unable to decide for whom, the returning officer in Ward Seven, Port Harcourt, registered a 100 per cent turnout, then assigned 250 ghost votes to the All Peoples' Party and 250 to their rivals, the People's Democratic Party.

That, said one international observer, was a sure sign that Nigerians were getting a free and fair chance to rig their own elections.

But the incident during parliamentary elections last weekend goes to the heart of what Nigerians despairingly call "the Nigerian syndrome" — a determination to be corrupt, whatever the outcome. "We are suffering a national disease which has infected us all. Following an example set by our leaders over decades, we despise those who play by the rules. Ministers who do not steal from their own departments are seen as fools," said Sola Akinyede, a leading Lagos lawyer.

Next weekend 40 million voters will go to the polls in presidential elections and attempt to end the military rule which has controlled Nigeria for all but ten years of more than three decades since independence. Dictatorship has enabled successive cabals of officers, and their civilian conspirators, to amass fortunes.

The Government estimates that under the unlamented regime of the late Sani Abacha his family were able to cream off up to £1.25 billion from contracts to import refined petroleum. Although the world's sixth largest producer of crude, Nigeria's own refineries were deliberately run down and unable to produce anywhere near local demands.

There is no walk of life untouched by "419", as theft is labelled in the Nigerian penal code. Abuja, the country's new capital, proved a vast slush fund for officers and their cronies, who took kickbacks on contracts to build government buildings, including a new maritime department several hundred miles from the sea, then overestimated the costs and pocketed the difference.

Both Olu Falae, the APP candidate for the presidency, and General Olusegun Obasanjo, the PDP candidate who is expected to win, have pledged to stamp out "419" and end the international perception that Nigeria is synonymous with corruption. But ordinary Nigerians have little faith in either man's ability to do so.

"I've given half a million dollars to Obasanjo, half a million to Falae, and another half a million to fund the election campaigns of both parties. This is all just a farce — it's window dressing," said a prominent Washington-based Nigerian businessman. "I don't give a damn who wins. I'm just making these donations to ensure that we can all carry on as usual," he said as General Obasanjo addressed a fundraising dinner here.

While party coffers have been filled by others interested in a continuation of the status quo, the nation's coffers are so bare there are plans to sell off the state's shares in joint ventures with oil companies, construction firms and import-export enterprises.

"We hope that we can raise some money to put our hospitals back into action and educate our people, while reducing the abilities of government officials, ministers and army officers to plunder the resources of the country," a leading member of the PDP said.

But, he added, it would take "more than 100 years" to heal the damaged ethics of a nation which is no longer able to resist a dodgy deal, even if there are no winners.

CORINNE DUFKA / REUTERS



Olusegun Obasanjo, front-runner for the presidency, addresses a crowd yesterday

Briton jailed for beating children

Singapore: A British woman living here has been jailed for four months for beating her two adopted children with a bamboo stick. The injuries were noticed by a teacher the next day.

Audrey Price, 36, admitted battering her son, ten, and daughter, six, for lying, *The Straits Times* said.

The children, who were her nephew and niece, were placed in the care of the Community Development Ministry.

Price was said to have taken the children to the girl's bedroom on October 28, ordered them to hold on to a bunk bed and then beaten them with their pants down. At one point the boy had been tied to the bunk's ladder.

A hospital found bruises, welts and scars on the children's buttocks and on the backs of their thighs.

Price, who lives with her husband, pleaded for leniency saying that she had sent the children for counselling and had sought police advice over their stealing and lying.

WORLD IN BRIEF

Chinese mid-air explosion kills 64

Beijing: A China Southwest Airlines plane exploded in mid-air near the eastern city of Wenzhou, killing all 64 people on board, officials said. The Tupolev-154 was flying from Chengdu in the southwestern province of Sichuan to Wenzhou, and was carrying 51 passengers and 13 crew, an official said.

The plane exploded in a huge fireball as it came in to land. The latest in a string of Asian crashes, it was the worst aviation disaster in China since June 1994. Witnesses in the small township of Gexia, 15 miles south-west of Wenzhou airport, said body parts had been scattered over a large area of countryside. No details were immediately available on the nationality of passengers. Investigators were flying to the scene. *(AFP)*

Death row delay

Florence, Arizona: A US appeals court stayed the execution of a German citizen who fatally stabbed a bank manager in 1982. It said that executing Karl LaGrand in the gas chamber is unconstitutionally cruel and unusual. LaGrand specifically chose lethal gas over injection, hoping the court would make such a ruling. Arizona inmates sentenced to death before 1992 are given a choice between lethal gas and injection. The state was yesterday appealing to the US Supreme Court to overturn the stay. *(AP)*

Venice gas plan halted

Rome: A plan to exploit natural gas reserves in the Adriatic Sea close to Venice has been rejected for the time being (John Phillips writes). Officials said Edo Ronchi, the Environment Minister, decided that mining could cause the canal city to sink. A risk study said exploitation of the methane reserves could cause subsidence of the sea bed and affect Venice. But the ministry did not close the door entirely on exploitation, inviting the energy concern, Agip, to present further studies on the environmental implications.

Ethiopia tank battle



Asmara: Eritrean soldiers guarding the border with Ethiopia near Assab where heavy fighting between the two countries' forces continued. Eritrea said it destroyed 31 Ethiopian tanks and shot down a helicopter during clashes in the disputed border region of Badme, the western front of the border war. Yermane Gebremeskel, a government spokesman, said that fighting was continuing late in the afternoon on the second day of an Ethiopian ground offensive. *(Reuters)*

Harare tycoon dies

Harare: Roger Boka, a leading black empowerment campaigner in Zimbabwe whose bank collapsed last year amid questionable practices, has died aged 54. He died on board a private jet on Sunday as it approached Harare airport, his family said. He was returning from the US where he had sought medical treatment for an illness, according to his daughter. Newspapers reported he was suffering from a chest infection and Kaposi's sarcoma, medical conditions often linked to Aids. *(AP)*

Mauritius hit by riots

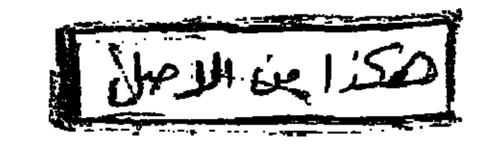
Port Louis: President Uteem of Mauritius threatened to clamp a curfew on the Indian Ocean holiday island after three people were killed in three days of riots sparked by the suspicious death of Kaya, a popular reggae singer, in police custody. Mr Uteem promised a judicial inquiry. Kaya was arrested last week after smoking marijuana at a rally organised by the political Republican Movement to press for legalisation of the drug. A coroner's report gave the cause of death as a skull fracture. *(AFP)*

Arsonist's satanic spree

Indianapolis: An Indiana man has allegedly admitted setting fire to as many as 50 churches in 11 states, and claims he began his spree with two others who helped him burn a church in a satanic ritual. Jay Ballinger, 36, of Indiana, was arrested after going to hospital with bad burns. Two others were charged over one fire: Angela Wood, 24, of Atlanta, Mr Ballinger's girlfriend, and Donald Puckett, 37, of Lebanon, Indiana. *(AP)*

Gay envoy presented

Copenhagen: Australia's new Ambassador to Denmark, Stephen Brady, has presented his partner, Peter Stevens, to Queen Margrethe, the Danish tabloid *Extra Bladet* reported. It was the first time an ambassador has introduced his homosexual partner to the royal family. In 1989, Denmark became the first country to allow civil marriages between homosexuals. *(AFP)*



Voyage of discovery in the white wilderness

Andrea Barrett's new novel, a gripping historical account of physical and emotional duress in the Arctic, is likely to be one of the year's most celebrated books. Interview by **Erica Wagner**


JUSTIN SUTCLIFFE

Andrea Barrett: "I went to where the Inuit hunt, watching the sun go round in the sky and getting an experience of the weather, the stillness, the light"

In 1859, Captain Leopold M'Clintock of the steam yacht *Fox* found a small stone cairn on the northwest coast of King William Island, high in the Canadian Arctic. Hidden inside was a slip of paper, the last entry on which read:

April 25, 1848 — HM ships Terror *and* Erebus *were deserted on April 22, five leagues N.N.W. of this having been beset since September 12, 1846. The officers and crews, consisting of 105 souls, under the command of Captain FRM Crozier, landed here in lat 69deg. 98min. 41sec. W. Sir John Franklin died on June 11, 1847; and the total loss by deaths in the expedition has been, to this date, nine officers and 15 men. [Signed] F.R.M. Crozier, captain and senior officer. James Fitzjames, captain of HMS* Erebus. *And start tomorrow, 26th, for Back's Fish River.*

Sir John Franklin set out in 1845 with the *Erebus* and *Terror* to find the Northwest Passage. With him sailed 134 men: none returned. Men and ships vanished into the frozen north, and in the years that followed, 40 vessels were sent to search for the lost expedition. Very little, if anything, was ever found of Franklin and his men; the explorer entered polar mythology as one of the first heroic casualties of the battle to conquer what were perceived, at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, as the last places on Earth.

Yet what fascinated those long-gone travellers about that white wilderness fascinates still. The British Film Institute's screening of a restored print of film taken on Sir Ernest Shackleton's 1914-16 expedition to the Antarctic was the best-attended restoration in the BFI's history: all those who crowded in to see Shackleton's ship, *Discovery*, crushed by the polar ice should eagerly snatch up Andrea Barrett's novel *The Voyage of the Narwhal*, to be published on March 1 by HarperCollins.

Barrett, a tall, softly spoken American in her mid-forties with a mane of curly grey hair cascading down her back, won the National Book Award in 1996 for her collection of short stories with a scientific bent, *Ship Fever*. The riveting *Narwhal* takes up where that book, and Sir John Franklin, left off.

Set in the 1850s, *The Voyage of the Narwhal* compellingly combines physical and intellectual endeavour. It follows Erasmus Darwin Wells, a middle-aged naturalist, in his attempt to jump-start his life by shipping out with Zeke Voorhees, a young man recklessly commanding an expedition in search of Franklin. In spare, crystalline prose, Barrett conjures the wilderness both within and without her characters, and pulls the reader headlong on a fascinating, horrifying journey.

> I love the ice and snow and cold; I hate the heat

Outside the window of the Manhattan apartment where we spoke, flat winter light made the Hudson River shine silver as it flowed down from the north. Barrett, who lives with her husband, a biologist, in Rochester, New York, looked out at the water as she told me what had drawn her to the Arctic and its lore. "I grew up on Cape Cod," she says. "Something about the ocean, the water's edge, is arctic in feel: sea and sky and endless merging. I've also skied since I was tiny — my father was a ski racer and he wanted me to be one; later, he was a ski patrolman and my mother told me that he would carry me down the mountains in a backpack before I could walk. I love the ice and snow and cold; I hate the heat."

Barrett began not as a novelist but, like many of her characters, as a scientist. She abandoned this path when she realised, belatedly, that science — at least in its 20th-century form — was not what she was cut out for.

"It wasn't until I got into graduate school that I realised I am incapable of constructing an experiment, and that constructing experiments is the nature of being an independent scientist. What I had understood to be science was, in fact, the history and philosophy of science. What I have is a passion for the passion: a fascination for the fascination; an obsession with the obsession. It took me a great many years to see that what I mistook for my own obsessions were, in fact, other people's. It's not worse — it's different."

Barrett longed to be what, in the previous century, was called a naturalist: her passion for the physical world around her is undimmed, and this fuels *The Voyage of the Narwhal*. She captures a sense of real discovery, able to convey on paper what it must have been like to see what had never been painted or photographed, when the only way of conveying information about these distant, frozen places was by pencil lines or words.

The *Narwhal* soon becomes imprisoned in the closing pack ice; the men must try to free her by main force. "It was like a single long nightmare," Barrett writes, "in which time passed too quickly and then, especially when they were bent to the capstan bars, refused to pass at all. The continuous light made things worse, not better: white, white, white tinged with blue, with gold, with green; white, more white.

"Their eyes burnt, and as the sun looped around the sky, to the east in the morning, then south, then west, then finally in the north at night, with them still working, horribly sunburnt, they began to yearn for the colours they never saw; sweet, rich reds, the green of leaves. In their blurry sleepless state, with their bodies strained and aching, Erasmus wasn't surprised that they should lose sight of what brought them there. It was all the crew could do to keep the boat moving and out of danger."

Although Barrett abandoned formal science, she never lost her love of research. All her books — *Narwhal* is her fifth novel, though the first to be published in Britain — are firmly grounded in her reading and her travels, whether they are set in the past or the present day.

To Barrett, researching the past rather than the present means simply reading "a different set of books". "As the books have continued to evolve, they have become more divorced from elements of my lived life in all aspects, so there is more research and it takes more time, but the nature of the process is not qualitatively different. The contemporary is, I suppose, easier to write: if I am going to write a historical story, I have to digest all this stuff. A dear friend of mine says that this process is akin to watching a boa constrictor swallow a hat — and the hat-swallowing phase can be rather long and arduous."

Writing *The Voyage of the Narwhal* involved more than simply reading. Before the novel was finished, she travelled to the Canadian Arctic, to an Inuit village called Pond Inlet on Baffin Island. "There's a channel between Bylot Island and Baffin Island and the ice stays frozen there a little longer than in most places. The Inuit go out every year about 15 miles along that ice to the ocean, and hunt. But the Inuit will also take stupid white people there because they pay better than the fish do, and that's where I went, watching the sun go round in the sky and watching the birds and getting an experience of the weather, of the stillness, of the light."

Like the travellers in *The Voyage of the Narwhal*, she did not have a camera. "My inability to describe or sketch what I saw in a way that did the landscape justice was very educational in terms of the experiences of my characters."

She discovered, too, that she had simply not understood some essential details from her reading, such as how the sun moves in the sky when it never sets. "People talk about ellipses and figures of eight but I couldn't see it right and I wasn't writing about it right. When I saw it, I understood it. Being there really changed the book a lot."

These days, at work on a new book of stories, she spends most of her time at home, writing and reading, although she teaches part-time at Warren Wilson College in North Carolina and does as many readings as her nervousness of public speaking will allow. "I say yes to all these people," she says ruefully, "and then I remember that they want you to talk."

There are always those who argue that historical novels are not relevant to the world we live in: that they are — even more than all fiction is, in any case — just a form of escape. That is certainly not true of *The Voyage of the Narwhal*, which is able to confront certain issues, such as the exploitation of native peoples by those who call themselves explorers, with much more freedom and clearer sight than if its writer were imprisoned in a modern cell of political correctness: Barrett's work stands alongside that of writers such as Beryl Bainbridge and Pat Barker.

"Good historical fiction engages with the modern world, just as good history engages with the modern world. Why do we need any more books about the Civil War? Why do we need any more books about the Reformation? It has all been done. But we write new books and we read new books because they are always at the same time about our world, our perceptions and our interpretations."

It is this that makes *The Voyage of the Narwhal* a remarkable modern novel, and its unassuming author an adventurer in the truest sense of the word.

● The Voyage of the Narwhal *by Andrea Barrett (HarperCollins, £16.99, ISBN 0 00 225793 9).*

● **Book review, page 43**

Sex and the older woman



Dr Thomas Stuttaford reports on the benefits of HRT; drugs that cause men to grow breasts; outbreaks of 'mad goat' disease in Italy; rest and back pain; suicide among young people

If the menopause is a problem, it is a problem of civilisation. When the Romans conquered Britain two millennia ago, the expectation of life for a woman was 23. Until the late 19th century only one woman in three reached her menopause, but now the average life expectancy is 78 and most of *The Times's* female readers should plan to make it to their eighties. They will have at least 30 post-menopausal years.

The average age of the menopause in Britain is 51, although it is three or four years later on the West Coast of Scotland and the Western Isles. For those who fear the post-menopausal years, the news has never been better. The various types of HRT on the market are constantly improving, and not only is HRT likely to reduce the incidence of heart disease, ischaemic strokes, osteoporosis and Alzheimer's disease, but, according to recent research, it is going to add more zest, even passion, to the last third of a woman's life.

> HRT will add zest, even passion, to women's lives

Dr Alessandra Graziottin, a gynaecologist in Milan, was in London this week to introduce her book *Sexuality in the Elderly*, coupled with a new HRT skin patch marketed under the product Evorel. These are only a tenth of a millimetre and are nearly colourless, moulding well to the skin. Women who have had a hysterectomy should have Evorel, those who have not need Evorel Sequi or Evorel Conte so as to receive both oestrogen and progestogen.

Dr Graziottin pleads the cause of older women who, she says, in a youth-orientated society suffer under the taboo against sexuality in the elderly, and that this taboo is more of a problem for women than men.

Surveys show that in the years just before the menopause, about 30 per cent of women have no sex life. In the years immediately after it, 40 per cent have abandoned "all that sort of thing" — as they say in the surgery — and that those who are still active are sometimes reluctant partners.

Dr Graziottin quoted from a study which showed that more than 25 per cent of women taking HRT still worried about the effect of the menopause on their sex life. This was hardly surprising as, before they had started on HRT, 79 per cent had lost their libido — their sexual drive — and 63 per cent complained of lack of energy in general. Seventy-five per cent of the women whose sex drive had ebbed with the years, and their periods, were concerned that their husbands would lose affection for them.

More than 60 per cent of women noticed benefit from taking HRT. The benefits were not confined to the bedroom, but affected nearly every aspect of their lives. Interestingly, although only 41 per cent of women noticed an improvement in their sex life, 57 per cent of their partners were pleased with the result.

There was also an immediate improvement in such symptoms as hot flushes, night sweats and lack of energy. The immediate menopausal mental symptoms, moodiness, tearfulness and depression, were also eased in between 70 and 95 per cent of cases. After two years on HRT all the symptoms, in well over 75 per cent of patients, had disappeared.

Dr Graziottin feels that the problems of both wanting to have some passion in life and remaining attractive extends beyond the atrophic changes and their consequences on the vagina, bladder and the breasts.

Women feel defeminised because of the loss of their sexual identity, weight gain, wrinkles, dry skin and hair, loss of lubrication, difficulties in achieving orgasm, and very possibly an aversion to sexual contact.

Surprisingly, sensory organs that influence libido and attractiveness include the skin, the sense of smell and taste. Dr Graziottin says that the change of a woman's smell is particularly important because of pheromones secreted by the sweat and sebaceous glands of younger skin. These are restored by HRT.

BILL LING



Sexual identity: more than 60 per cent of women noticed benefits from taking hormone replacement therapy

Why men grow big breasts

IN the same week that Dr Alessandra Graziottin was advising on how women may maintain a soft-skinned, youthful breast by using the latest HRT derived from natural sources, Dr Mark Walker, of Newcastle University, was giving warning to men in the *Prescriber* magazine of the various drugs, invaluable as they are, that may, dismayingly, achieve rather the same results for them.

As those who have played rugby football — and used a communal bath — know, the size of men's breasts varies considerably between individuals. In old-fashioned rugby sides, the huge breasts of the second-row forwards were no more than the result of too much beer and too many sandwiches.

However, an increase in the amount of actual breast tissue, often associated with tenderness and some firmness under the nipples, is much more important and constitutes a condition known as gynaecomastia.

The second-row forwards' breasts are not simply the result of too many calories: they can also be blamed on an excessive amount of alcohol. Alcohol has a feminising effect because it increases levels of oestrogen, the female hormone, while at the same time testosterone levels fall. Gynaecomastia through increased blood oestrogen levels can also be caused by marijuana, digoxin — which is used to treat heart failure — and griseofulvin, which is prescribed for treating skin fungi.

Substances other than alcohol which reduce the testosterone level are cimetidine, which is used to treat indigestion, spironolactone, a diuretic, ketoconazole, another fungicide, phenytoin, which is commonly prescribed for some forms of epilepsy, or the anti-androgen agent cyproterone acetate.

It is less well known that similar but lesser effects may be the result of prescribing the major tranquillisers, the antipsychotic agents such as the largactil group of drugs, the phenothiazines and haloperidol. Two hypotensive agents taken to lower blood pressure, reserpine and methyldopa, may also occasionally increase breast tissue, as can metoclopramide — better known as Maxolon — which treats nausea.

The tricyclic antidepressant may also cause some breast heaviness, and so, too, can verapamil, which is useful in controlling some forms of cardiac arrhythmia. All of these have important uses in medicine.

However, marijuana-induced breasts would seem to offer no compensatory medical advantages. And those whose breasts are enlarging for no better reason than that they sink too many pints of beer should also take heed and restrict their intake to either two pints a day, or half a bottle of wine. Alcohol in moderation will not have this effect but, if too much is taken, a man will not only develop big breasts and a big belly, but skinny arms and legs, genital atrophy and a paucity of body hair.

The disadvantages are not only cosmetic. In cases of gynaecomastia the feminine breasts may, like those of a woman, develop cancer. It is not unusual for men to have such big breasts that mammography is called for.

Italy hit by outbreak of 'mad goat' disease

THOSE holidaying in some parts of Italy this year should, perhaps, eschew a kid stew or even rack of lamb. There is a report in *The Lancet* from the Laboratory of Veterinary Medicine in Rome about a recent increase in transmissible spongiform encephalopathy. TSE is to the goats and sheep of Tuscany, Sicily, Sardinia and Apulia what BSE — "mad cow" disease — has been to the Friesian cows of Norfolk.

Vets studying 20 outbreaks of TSE suggest that the timing of the outbreaks (there were 15 in the first six months of 1997) and the high incidence in flocks (up to 90 per cent) imply that the spread of the disease probably had an accidental cause. It is also unusual for so many goats to be involved, but on this occasion there have been more than 390 cases. It seems unlikely that the sheep and goats were infected by contaminated food, as some of the flocks worst affected were receiving no food that could have been infected by bonemeal or other animal protein.

The likely cause is thought to be the contamination of a vaccine prepared with material from the brains and mammary glands of sheep. There are several strains of TSE, with different properties, that may be capable of affecting human beings. There was also an accidental outbreak in Scotland in 1935 after the use of contaminated vaccine. It is not known whether there was any increase in Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease as a result.

LLOYD WRIGHT



Goats in some parts of Italy have been afflicted with TSE

Riddle of boy's suicide

INEVITABLY, there has been discussion this week about suicide among young people, and everyone's heart goes out to the Taylor family. After Malcolm Taylor's statement about the death of his son Nicholas, it would seem, if this was a case of suicide, that there were many atypical features, and that Mr Taylor's analysis was motivated by reasonableness rather than the grief that he must be feeling.

Dr Peter Hardwick, a consultant psychiatrist, has made a study of adolescent suicide and recently published findings in *Young Minds* magazine. He noticed pointers to suicide risk: most of the victims had existing psychiatric problems, particularly depression, which was apt to be marked by antisocial behaviour, alcohol or drug abuse. Many youths had spoken about their suicidal intentions.

Before a suicide attempt is made, an adolescent usually displays signs of unhappiness. There is a lack of high-spirited chatter and laughter, a loss of interest in the future, in hobbies and in friends, and a reluctance to go out. The adolescent's mood changes and he or she becomes withdrawn and unhappy. If Mr Taylor was correct in his assessment of his son's manner, speech and plans just before his death, Nicholas would have not qualified for special attention on any of these points. In fact, according to his father, there is evidence that his mood and behaviour totally contradicted each and every one.

Don't bother resting that back

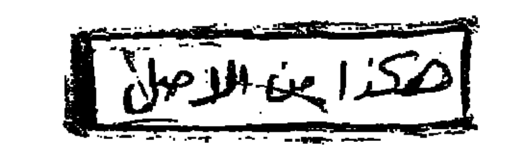
TIMES readers are very attached to traditional treatment and are not always particularly interested if modern statisticians show it to be useless. Several readers have written in quite angrily to say how a few weeks of absolute rest after they put their backs out is the way to relieve the pain and return to normal living.

Unfortunately for readers who are prepared to spend weeks lying on the floor, there is more bad news.

Another study, this time by Dr Richard Deyo of the University of Washington, Seattle, published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, demonstrates that though bed rest has been the standard treatment for nerve-root pain for nearly 70 years, it is no better than doing nothing. In a trial, patients were either assigned to bed rest or watchful waiting. All patients were given painkillers. Seventy per cent of the bed-rest group reported an improvement, as did 65 per cent who remained up and about. After 12 weeks, 87 per cent of patients in both groups had improved, whatever the treatment.

There was no significant difference between groups in regard to pain and activity. Intriguingly, the likelihood of recovering was not related to whether there was evidence of nerve-root compression.

Dr Deyo said that it was already known that bed rest was ineffective for non-specific lower back pain; this trial has shown that it makes no difference even when the back pain is associated with sciatica.



Man cannot live by barns alone

Farmers must be more than glorified park-keepers

In Julian Barnes's new novel, *England, England*, an idealised version of England and its best-loved traditions is recreated on the Isle of Wight. Village pubs, Devonshire cream teas, Robin Hood and his Merrie Men, Beefeaters, the White Cliffs of Dover — all the images of a mythical olde worlde country are brought together and made real.

This of course includes rural England. Modern agriculture, with its battery hens and slurry-filled yards is replaced by the countryside as we like to imagine it. Shepherds in smocks whistle up their old English sheepdogs, rustics with wooden pitchforks toss hay on to stacks, and plodding horses drag jolting carts down winding lanes. Sir Jack Pitman, the billionaire mogul behind this enterprise, points out that since the traditional English countryside was a largely artificial, man-made creation, there is no reason why it should not be turned into one that attracts visitors rather than repels them. "I'm not talking about agriculture," he says. "I'm talking about people."

Sir Jack, it seems, may be the hidden hand behind the reforms to the European Union's common agricultural policy being negotiated in Brussels this week. The ministers of Europe's 15 member states are discussing Agenda 2000, a revolutionary proposal that could turn farming policy on its head. Those who live on the land are no longer to be encouraged, as they have been in the past, to produce more, to farm intensively, to build surpluses and to provide cheap food for consumers, whatever the cost. They are to become guardians of the countryside, charged with conserving the environment rather than despoiling it, diversifying into tourism, crafts and service industries. We're not talking about agriculture, we're talking about people, seems to be the message. And if you think I parody, consider this extract from the EU's own statement on the new CAP:

"The Community is concentrating on building small and medium-sized businesses, exploiting new technology in favour of rural areas, rural tourism and so on . . . the main priorities are craft investments, the renovation and development of villages, and the protection of the environment, maintenance of the countryside and restoration of the landscape."

What this means is that instead of subsidising the produce of the land, it is the land itself that will be subsidised. And since that depends on the people who live there, it is they who must be supported — provided that they diversify along the lines envisaged by the EU. In one sense, this process has already begun. Ask any sheep-farmer who has seen the price of his lambs drop to below the price of a packet of crisps, and you will find him looking elsewhere for income. The recent TV series on farming by Oliver Walston, himself a barley baron who has waged a steady campaign against EU subsidies, revealed an industry in crisis, with small and medium-sized farmers turning to outside sources of funding to survive.

A friend who farms in the Borders was amazed to realise that the three cottages which he had renovated and let to holidaymakers now provide half his annual income. The comments he sees in his visitors' book show that those who come to enjoy the rural life appear to share Sir Jack's views: "We loved to see the sheep being rounded up," said one. "We hope they're not being sent to market." My friend is hoping to invest in a smock and a crook.

It is a seductive idea. Who could object to seeing our hedgerows replaced, our drystone dykes rebuilt, and all those hideous tin grainstores replaced by half-timbered barns the way we think we remember them? The encouragement of organic farming and traditional agriculture sounds good to those of us who live in towns, and it is, as Mr Walston points out, absurd that he, a wealthy farmer, should be paid a third of his income in subsidies, to produce more grain that nobody wants, while crofters and hill-farmers go to the wall.

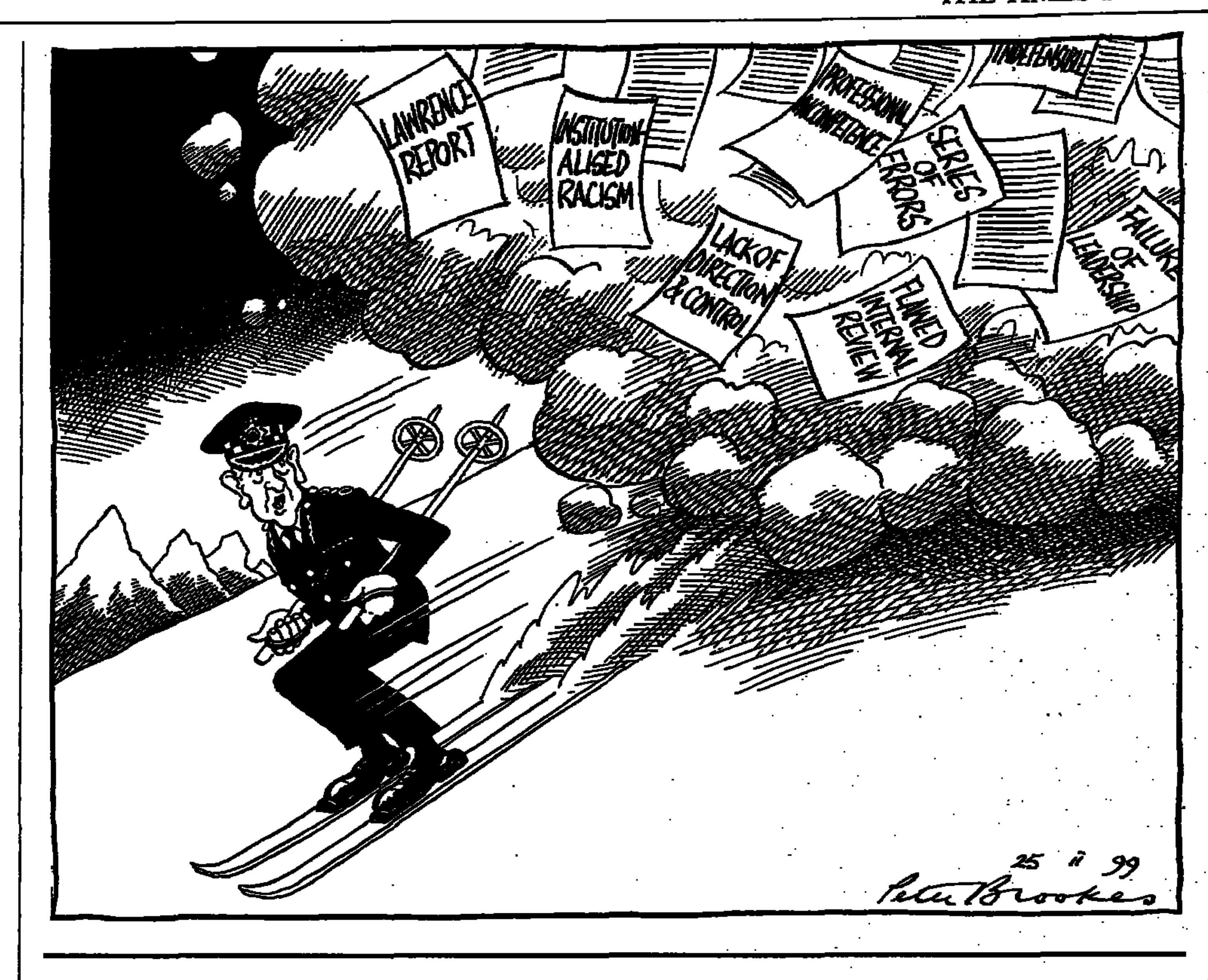
Seductive, but superficial. Whatever conclusions they reach this week, EU ministers must swiftly reassure small and medium-sized farmers that there is a future in agriculture, and not just in conservation and tourism. For generations, farmers have been encouraged to expand and modernise and they have done so with notable success. Under Margaret Thatcher they moved in just ten years from supplying less than half Britain's food needs to near self-sufficiency. They have contributed to low prices in the shops and have consistently outperformed their European competitors.

Magnus Linklater

If all that is to be reversed, the incentives that attract the best farmers and the most innovative ideas would be removed. Progressive agriculture would be downgraded or discouraged. There would be early retirement plans to encourage the older, most experienced farmers to hand over their land to larger concerns which would implement the new policies. The ambition to produce the fattest sheep, the highest-yielding cow, the earliest crop, all the ingredients that make agriculture worthwhile and profitable, would be reined back.

The net effect would be to drive the best farmers, who have no desire to become outdoor housekeepers or glorified park-keepers, off the land. The skills of husbandry and good land management, built up over generations, would be lost. And who knows when we might need them again? Farming has been a lifeline often enough for Britain in the past. It could become so again. Sir Jack's pastoral idyll is a pleasant dream, but it is no more than that. In Brussels this week, they should remember that man cannot live by half-timbered barns alone.

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Tony meets his nemesis

The Prime Minister's plan to ditch the pound could be his undoing

Watching Tony Blair's parliamentary statement about the single currency on Tuesday, I suddenly experienced a reprise of the delicious tingling I experienced when I watched Bill Clinton's videotaped Lewinsky testimony last October and, before that, when I saw Michael Portillo's defeat in Enfield in May 1997. On each occasion it was the feeling that I might be witnessing a truly historic event.

Don't worry, this is not going to be another technical article about the rights and wrongs of economic and monetary union. This is a subject on which I have often expounded in the past and there will be time enough to return to it in the years ahead. It was not Mr Blair's apparent decision to join EMU that created the sense of history on Tuesday. The likelihood that Britain will join EMU in the foreseeable future was not much affected by anything the Prime Minister said. In my view, the probability of Britain joining is still around 60 per cent, about where it has been ever since 1991, when John Major signed the Maastricht treaty. The odds are slightly better than even, not because economic management from Frankfurt will be good for Britain, but because the herd instinct of Britain's business elite will probably, in the end, overwhelm the public's instinctive good sense.

Why, then, did I sense that history was stalking the House of Commons? Because Mr Blair's statement was as politically portentous as it was vacuous from an economic point of view. And just as importantly, the same could, for once, be said about the rebuttal by William Hague. Mr Hague displayed, for the first time since he became Conservative leader, the gravity and depth required from a Leader of the Opposition. He seemed not just graver, but somehow even older, than usual. As he forensically exposed the deviousness and inconsistency of the Government's policies on Europe, it was possible to fantasise that Mr Hague might be more than an irrelevant sacrificial placeholder — a Tory version of Neil Kinnock or Michael Foot. Maybe we might, after all, be witnessing the maturing, formative experiences of a Thatcher-style dark horse.

It seemed conceivable, in sum, that Tuesday's statement would be seen in retrospect as a watershed in British politics. Mr Blair's ringing declaration for EMU, so starkly inconsistent with his pre-election wooing of disillusioned Thatcherite voters, could one day be remembered as the apogee of a political career which seemed to enjoy divine protection up to that point. The Prime Minister has thus far defied all the laws of politics by avoiding the usual slump in popularity during the parliamentary mid-term. But maybe this would prove to be his moment of maximum hubris, comparable to Mrs Thatcher's Bruges speech, Mr Major's 1992 election triumph or Harold Wilson's declaration that Labour had become "the natural party of government".

Anatole Kaletsky

Why *do* I think that nemesis might be approaching for Mr Blair? Because his new policy on EMU did not come across as a positive, self-confident declaration in favour of the euro, but as a nervous, defensive, negative decision to abolish the pound. Even in the devoutly pro-EMU *Independent* the headline read "Blair gears up to ditch the pound". Herein lies the real threat not only to Mr Blair's European policy, but perhaps to his personal popularity and even his entire political project.

Adopting the euro is almost universally perceived in Britain, even by EMU supporters, as an uncomfortable necessity, an essentially defensive decision — something the country must *do* to avoid "missing the bus" or "being relegated to the second division". The reason why EMU is perceived so much more negatively in Britain than in the rest of Europe has nothing to do with our cynical national character or a general distrust of politicians. The explanation is rooted in the EMU project itself. On the Continent the euro is seen mainly as an economic means to an essentially political end. The objective is to create a powerful political union capable of holding its own against the United States and protecting Europe from the domination of Anglo-Saxon culture.

In Britain, by contrast, the political unification of Europe is unpopular, even among many EMU supporters. It is presented as a purely economic project — something that should be undertaken only if the economic benefits are "unambiguous and clear", to quote Mr Blair's own words. But, even ignoring the many economic arguments *against* EMU, nothing is ever "clear and unambiguous" in economics. Mr Blair will be able to win economic support for EMU only by spreading fear about the costs of staying outside.

But this general negativity towards EMU puts Mr Blair in a double bind. To justify joining the euro he must persuade the public that Britain is too weak and insignificant to run an independent economic policy outside monetary union. But this is manifestly false, since Britain is the fifth largest economy in the world, with far greater scope to exercise economic sovereignty than such successful countries as Canada, Switzerland and Australia. To prove that there is no choice but to join EMU, Mr Blair must therefore convince the public that the British economy is actually weaker than it seems. That means running down his own Government's economic achievements — ranging from his welfare state reforms to the surprisingly successful policy of transferring monetary authority to the Bank of England.

The tension between running down and boosting Britain is not just a theoretical problem. It can be crystallised in a very simple political contradiction. To win convincingly in the next general election Mr Blair needs a strong, non-inflationary economic recovery between the end of this year and 2001. But if the economy performs well in the years leading up to an EMU referendum, it will be hard to convince the public why Britain is in such mortal peril if it stays out. If, on the other hand, the British economy performs poorly between now and 2001, how will Mr Blair maintain the popularity he needs to risk a referendum?

This Catch-22 in terms of Britain's economic performance points to a more immediate and personal danger for Mr Blair. By making Tuesday's statement, the Prime Minister has undertaken to champion the cause of British membership and to lead public opinion in the months and years ahead.

But what if the public refuses to be led? What if his statement, instead of making the euro more popular, actually leads to a swing in the opposite direction in the polls? Mr Blair will then be in another double bind. If public opinion swings against the euro he will be under huge pressure to intensify his pro-euro rhetoric, but this could turn opinion even more strongly against the euro and against himself. If, on the other hand, Mr Blair ignores a negative swing in public opinion and decides to lie low until the time for a referendum is nearer, he will face accusations of cowardice, opportunism and hypocrisy from EMU supporters. After Tuesday's statement, these accusations will be justified.

The hope in Downing Street is, of course, that the Government's commitment to join the euro will create a sense of momentum and inevitability that will move public opinion in favour of EMU. Perhaps it will. But if the people balk — and the first important test will be in June's European elections — Mr Blair could be in serious political peril of a kind that was hard to imagine even a week ago.

Reversals of fortune are the stuff of politics, especially in the post-Cold War era when the absence of ideological anchors makes the public fickle and prone to massive swings in opinion on apparently flimsy grounds. Just look at the fates of Newt Gingrich, Margaret Thatcher, John Major, Jacques Chirac and Helmut Kohl. The only certainty in politics is that nemesis always follows hubris. The great question, as in Greek drama, is when nemesis will strike and how. Could it have been not just history, but nemesis stalking the Commons on Tuesday?

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'There are good reasons why Sir Paul Condon should not be hounded from office. But for those same reasons he should resign now'

Tim Hames

That Sir Paul Condon is a man of considerable decency, dignity and honour is not in doubt. That he has sought to confront racism within his constabulary cannot be denied either. For those reasons, the Home Secretary was right not to sack Sir Paul nor to allow him to be hounded from office. But Sir Paul's own sense of honour, and his commitment to fighting racism should, nevertheless, prompt him to realise that the most dignified response to his critics would be his own resignation.

The defence of Sir Paul appears to rest on four arguments. The first is that he is not himself a racist. Secondly, it is argued that his role in the events surrounding the investigation of Stephen Lawrence was marginal. Moreover, as many right-wing commentators have put it, "the police did not kill Mr Lawrence". The third line of defence is the proposition that Sir Paul's departure would "damage police morale" and undermine operational effectiveness. The final argument put in his defence now, rests on the imminence of his departure in any case. It is argued that since he has only 10 months left in his contract, he should be permitted to initiate what all concede will need to be drastic change.

There is some merit in all these assertions. But not much. They fade into insignificance before the much wider issue of institutional responsibility. The Macpherson report outlines a police inquiry of numbing ineptitude and insensitivity in response to a foul racist murder. There are rural police forces that have handled stranded cats with more conviction than the Met showed in the Lawrence case. There is, unfortunately, no reason to believe it was an isolated lapse. It reflects a force in dire straits.

Sir Paul is, of course, no racist. He has, indeed, proved a committed anti-racist. But that is not the point. It is a testament to the appalling state of the capital's police overall that the senior officer's shining track record on race is thought so worthy of comment. The central question is whether Sir Paul has reduced racism within his ranks. Sir William Macpherson of Cluny concludes that he has not.

The truism that "the police did not kill Stephen Lawrence" does not help us to understand matters. Police indifference contributed to an atmosphere in which racists and their victims felt that such attacks would carry a low risk of arrest and imprisonment.

Sir Paul did not personally cause this chain of events, nor did he condone them. Lord Carrington did not personally invade the Falklands and place the Argentine flag above Port Stanley. Nor did Sir Richard Greenbury, the former Marks & Spencer chairman, personally order a huge stock of uninspiring frocks that refused to sell. But both men walked the plank for others' actions. The accountability of the chief, not his individual association with error, is what matters.

The contention that police morale would collapse if Sir Paul hung up his truncheon is incredible. This line is often parroted by the same sort of people who, rightly, would never take such tosh from hospital administrators campaigning against NHS league tables. There is a section of the Met whose morale desperately needs to be lowered, preferably to the level at which they will seek other employment. Only if the most senior head rolls will it occur to every constable that in the new era, old attitudes are to be abandoned, not camouflaged in a more sophisticated fashion.

Finally, there is the absurd notion that because Sir Paul is scheduled to retire next January there is no value in him standing down now. The assumption is that he would be replaced by his Deputy Commissioner, John Stevens who, it is rumoured, is rather a conservative figure. None of this stands up to closer examination. Mr Stevens' record in Northumberland suggests he has several radical bones in his body. And there is no reason why, if Sir Paul announced his intention to retire early, Jack Straw could not install a permanent replacement before January.

Sir Paul would doubtless like to start the process of change that must come over his charge. But sincerity is not the same as credibility. History is hardly stuffed with lame-duck individuals, damaged by past failure, who swiftly and effectively impose radical reform.

There can be no root-and-branch reconstruction of the Met, especially not one that rebuilds the shattered confidence of the black community, that does not start with the immediate resignation of the Commissioner. The police in London don't require shiny new name badges, as was suggested yesterday but many new officers. Sir Paul's last act of public service should be to set an example by making way for a new Commissioner.

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Caught in law

JACK STRAW has infuriated the Attorney-General for his bungled attempt to suppress the fourth estate. When the Home Secretary sought his injunction to pull *The Sunday Telegraph's* splendid scoop on the Lawrence report, he failed to consult John Morris.

The A-G was watching a rugby match while Straw asked the Treasury Solicitor to find a judge in chambers. If our most senior law officer had been consulted, I understand he would have advised against seeking an injunction.

Morris's more considered approach reflects his experience the last time an attempt was made to stop papers reporting an embarrassing item. The A-G was persuaded to issue an injunction preventing the naming of Straw as the minister whose son had been accused of touting pungent cigarettes: the ban made bad law and sent Morris's reputation up in smoke.

ALEXANDRA AITKEN, the charming daughter of Jonathan, has been offered a head-turning



sum to appear in a toothpaste ad. "If I am going to establish myself as a sculptor, I need to make money," coos the tender creature (bearing her fangs, above). "But I would rather not have to. It is for some baking soda brand."

■ WAR at Westminster between Robin Oakley, BBC political editor, and his deputy, John Sergeant.

BBC types say the *frisson* dates back to 1992, when Sergeant, the housewife's choice, was overlooked for the job left vacant by John Cole. He has bristled ever since. In the latest eruption, Oakley is said to have screamed "you never have been a team player" to Sergeant, whose response was pithy. "They have their difficulties," I am told, "but it has to be seen in context."

MICK JAGGER (below left) and Rod Stewart (right) have bonded over their marital woes. The ageing sexual incontinents, normally steadfast combatants in love, have been chatting about single life, and trading tips about divorce lawyers. My advice: stay married, it's cheaper.




■ PADDY ASHDOWN's Dad had a bad war. "He was involved in every retreat starting with Dunkirk and ending with Burma," the Liberal Democrat leader told me at the unveiling of the Memorial Gates plan. The late John Ashdown had been a subaltern of the 14th Punjabis, in charge of an Indian mule company on the rout in 1940. "A disgraceful injunction to abandon the Indian soldiers. He refused and took them to Dunkirk. He was court-martialled but the British realised he had acted in the true traditions of the Indian Army and dropped the charge."

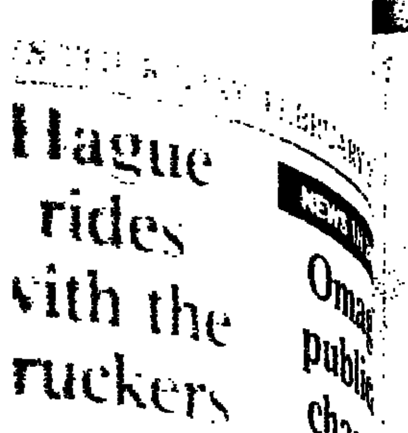
WARMING words from the assassin formerly known as Mrs Robin Cook. "Me trying to advise him was counter-productive, provoking him to excess," says Margaret. "His longest mini-addiction was comfort eating." Who can blame him?

■ THE High Sheriff of East Sussex, Viscountess Brentford, has made a request in the dying days of her office of official handshakes. "She's asked to be fire-bombed," I am told by a sergeant from the local police station.

"She's going to come to train with riot police and sit in a squad car chasing criminals — because she said she wants to know what it feels like. It was a strange request. But that's what the lady wants."

SIGNALS from the top of the TV mast bode ill for David Elstein's hopes of replacing Sir John Birt. Sir Christopher Bland, BBC Chairman, said to a huddle of big aerials: "Anyone who is not in this room is not a candidate." Elstein was lecturing in Oxford.

JASPER GERARD





THE LAWRENCE LEGACY

How to harness wisely the momentum of reform

Even after all the long preliminaries, the leaks, the reconstructions, the theatre, the campaigns, it is impossible to read the report of the Stephen Lawrence inquiry without succumbing to grief and anger. The waste of a promising young life, the evil that motivated murderers, and the incompetence of those charged with investigating this crime are, severally, enraging. Taken together, they form a bleak indictment of the nation's failure effectively to tackle racism. Those who have had to live with that failure for six years, and without the admirable son they loved, fully deserve the nation's sympathy. The dignity of Neville and Doreen Lawrence as they have tried to bring their son's killers to justice has been an inspiration. The desire to make amends for their loss is powerful and rooted in decency. But emotion, however noble, must not be allowed to sweep every other consideration from its path. The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report makes 70 recommendations, many of them overdue, but not all wise.

Anger has, understandably, found a focus in the Metropolitan Police's grotesquely incompetent handling of the murder investigation. The police's failure to deal effectively with the criminals responsible is shocking. But, now as earlier in the week, justice is still not served by the demand that the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Sir Paul Condon, should serve as a scapegoat for unassuaged grief. He has squarely accepted the criticism levelled at his force by Sir William Macpherson of Cluny and his team. Sir Paul was understandably reluctant to accept the blanket condemnation of his force implied by the initial accusation of "institutional racism". But he yesterday showed a mature appreciation of the flaws in the police service which were highlighted by the inquiry.

The police's failings are not best understood when viewed solely thorough the prism of race. Society as a whole has been ill-served by the police service's failure to reform its recruitment, training and operational practices. It is certainly true that recruitment from ethnic minorities has been woeful, but it is also worth noting that recruitment of talented graduates from every background has been remarkably poor. The police have failed not only to reflect a changing society, they have also failed to implement the managerial reforms which other public services have embraced. It should never be forgotten that this inquiry was made necessary by the police's failure to apprehend murderous criminals. Reform must concentrate on enhancing the operational effectiveness of the police rather than seeking to conciliate every interest group with a grievance.

The police still enjoy a level of public esteem and trust which forces in other nations envy, as Sir Norman Fowler pointed out in the Commons yesterday. But past complacency has allowed that trust and esteem to erode. Reform guided by enlightened liberal principles could limit the prospect of future failures.

Respect for liberal principles should also inform the Government's reaction to some of the inquiry's more ambitious recommendations. The proposal that individuals acquitted of one crime could be retried for the same offence, if new evidence is uncovered after the acquittal, is profoundly illiberal. It could allow the persecution of individuals by prosecuting authorities who felt the howl of public outrage at their back. Also disturbing is the suggestion that a racist incident be defined as "any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person". It should be for courts to exercise their settled judgment in assessing whether or not an incident is racist, not victims, however anguished. Justice depends on respecting the rights of victims, but those rights do not include elevating the victim to the judge's bench.

Most disturbing of all, perhaps, is the suggestion that the use of "racist language" should be considered a criminal offence "where such conduct can be proved to have taken place otherwise than in a public place". Criminalising the private expression of opinion, however offensive, would constitute a remarkable curtailment of an historic liberty. As Sir Norman Fowler wisely observed yesterday, those who legislate in anger often live to regret it. The anger which Stephen Lawrence's death still provokes is amply justified; the reform of the police is transparently justified; but erosion of traditional freedoms is not justified at all.

ARTS OF BRUSSELS

Why Blair must halt the EU's assault on the London art market

On Tuesday Tony Blair held out his "vision" of a European Union facing up to the "realities of global commerce". Today, barely 48 hours later, that vision comes up against another reality — the damage done to British commerce by ill-founded EU regulations that hobble the capacity of companies to compete in global markets.

The *droit de suite* directive, which comes before today's EU Internal Market Council, is a perfect example of the European Commission's misuse of its powers to prevent "distortions" of the EU's single market. It would impose an EU-wide sales tax, payable to the artist or his heirs, on any work sold during his lifetime or for 70 years thereafter. However benevolent the intentions behind such a law, which already exists in 11 EU countries, it is a social measure, properly a matter for national governments, which has no place in single market legislation.

The Commission justifies this meddling on the ground that artists' resale rights must be imposed EU-wide to prevent "distortion of competition" and "displacements of sales". This is nonsense. Most EU art markets are small and domestic. London, the EU's only truly international centre, would be *disproportionately* damaged. There is no gain for the EU. To avoid the levy, payable by the seller, vendors would move not just out of London but out of the EU altogether, to Geneva or New York. The "level playing field" would be emptied of players. If governments want to help artists in a non-distorting way, they should do so on a global basis, by amending the Berne Convention.

The Government estimates Britain's losses at £1.2 billion a year in lost business, around 5,000 jobs and perhaps £200 million of tax revenue. These losses would be in addition to the 40 per cent fall in business brought to the London market by non-EU customers since the imposition of a 2.5 per cent "import VAT" on works of art — a tax which is due to double in July and which never should have been accepted.

The legal basis of this directive should have been challenged at the start. Britain does not have the votes to block it now. The last line of defence is the "Luxembourg compromise", the crude weapon devised by the French with which governments can block EU legislation on the ground of "vital national importance". To a straight question in the Commons yesterday about whether or not he would wield it, Mr Blair avoided a straight answer, saying only that he was out to get "the best deal possible".

That is shorthand for compromise. The only good deal is no deal: to push this directive off the table, the Luxembourg compromise is the only strategy that will work. Tinkering with percentages is no substitute for defending the principle, which is that job-destroying "harmonisation" will not be tolerated. Mr Blair has a duty to defend one of this country's great international successes. He says that he has ruled nothing out; the proof will lie in whether, today, Lord Simon of Highbury takes up the Luxembourg blunderbuss.

SELECTIVE MEMORY

The Foreign Secretary's poodle is a disgrace to Parliament

The Foreign Office, savaged for its shoddy lines of communication with Britain's High Commissioner in Sierra Leone, now appears to have had all too close contact with the Commons Foreign Affairs Select Committee. The committee's draft report and key conclusions were leaked to the Foreign Office before publication, giving ministers improper advantage. Such collusion undermines Parliament's ability to hold the executive to account. The Government is awkwardly exposed as ready to condemn one leak, but exploit another.

The first culprit in this tawdry episode is Ernest Ross, the Labour MP for Dundee West, who has resigned from the select committee after admitting that he passed a draft of the report to the Government in January. Throughout the inquiry, Mr Ross behaved like the Foreign Secretary's poodle. Although he has apologised for breaching his colleagues' trust, Mr Ross should also reconsider his position on Labour's back benches. He chaired the selection committee which ruled that prominent leftwingers, such as Dennis Canavan, the MP for Falkirk West, were not fit to be official Labour candidates for the Scottish parliament. Sauce for the goose should be sauce for the gander.

Tony Lloyd, the Minister of State at the Foreign Office, should also be preparing for a career change. Only last week Mr Lloyd stated in a parliamentary written answer that the first time his department had seen the report was on February 9, publication day. He now claims that he thought the question referred to when the Foreign Office received the final version of the report. Such slippery evasions have marked ministers' approach to the whole Sierra Leone affair. The black spot should have been against Mr Lloyd's name at the last reshuffle: at the next, he must go.

The Foreign Secretary completes this unhappy cast. In opposition, he railed against William Waldegrave, then Health Secretary, for "nobbling" a select committee and being leaked a draft of one of its reports. In pleading now that neither he nor anyone else at the Foreign Office committed "any impropriety", Mr Cook is, at best, being evasive. The Standards and Privileges Committee should be told what action Mr Cook took to report the leak, what was done with the information smuggled out to the Foreign Office, and which other Government officials and ministers saw it. It is time for all lines of communication to be exposed to scrutiny.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Government's announced 'change of gear' on euro

From Mr Michael Fabricant, MP for Lichfield (Conservative)

Sir, The Prime Minister stated today: "Britain should join a successful single currency, provided the economic conditions are met" [reports and leading article, February 24]. He is right. Arguments surrounding a thousand years of British history pale into insignificance compared with the future wealth and prosperity of our nation. Questions of degree of economic sovereignty mean little to the general working population: job security and living standards will always mean more.

It is on those very issues, however, that the Prime Minister has been uncharacteristically silent. He says that our economy must converge with the eurozone before abandoning the pound. But our economic cycle has been out of synchronisation with that of continental Europe's for decades. There is no evidence that we are beginning to converge. To the contrary, our economy has benefited from being in step with that of the US.

If the Prime Minister believes that being part of a single monetary bloc is better than retaining the pound — and the economic arguments for this are still very shaky — why is there no consideration of an alternative "successful single currency" which does have a track record and whose economy is convergent with that of our own: the US dollar?

The Government vigorously opposed my Parliamentary Currency Commission Bill 12 months ago. This would have set up an independent commission to investigate and make recommendations, solely on economic grounds, as to which currency bloc, if any, would be most beneficial to Britain's financial wellbeing. This would have seemed in line with the Government's claim of economic pragmatism. Did its opposition arise from the fear that the commission might recommend sticking with sterling or worse still suggesting that the euro is a second-best alternative to the dollar?

Now that 21st-century technology has made geographical distance between nations irrelevant and economic and social compatibility all-important, the Prime Minister's claim in the House today that he is a man of "vision and pragmatism" belies the reality.

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL FABRICANT,
House of Commons.
February 23.

From Mr David Arculus and others

Sir, Business people throughout Britain will welcome the decisive lead that the Prime Minister has taken in setting out the details of the Government's National Changeover Plan, which explains the clear and practical steps that the country, including the public sector, must take in order to join the European single currency.

Opinion surveys have consistently shown that business is in favour of entering the euro when the time is right. But they also show that business suffers from uncertainty, and has wanted a clearer lead from the Government. Now that such a lead has been given by the Prime Minister himself, business will be greatly encouraged.

We recognise that the Government still has much to do, both to ensure that we meet the economic criteria for entering the euro, and to persuade public opinion that entry is the best course for Britain. We also recognise the need for further economic reform in Europe to preserve and enhance the competitiveness of the eurozone and its companies, and we welcome the Prime Minister's commitment to this reform.

Yours sincerely,
DAVID ARCULUS,
CLIVE HOLLICK,
COLIN MARSHALL,
BRYAN NICHOLSON,
COLIN SHARMAN,
KEITH TODD,
GEOFF UNWIN,
c/o European Movement,
Dean Bradley House,
52 Horseferry Road, SW1P 2AF.
February 24.

From Mr J. B. Crisp

Sir, This small company has euro accounts in London and Holland. It trades in Europe in US dollars and euros. It sells in the UK in sterling and euros. It buys in the Far East and South America in US dollars.

Prior to January 1, 1999, it traded in Europe in US dollars, German marks, Dutch guilders and Spanish pesetas.

The advent of the euro has made no difference to our trading activities, but the Prime Minister, in his statement today, seems to believe that the fact that we have opened euro accounts indicates our support for a single currency.

Far from it. We prefer to forgo any influence we may have in Europe if we join the single currency to maintain control over our own tax affairs. And to retain the option to devalue if trading conditions require it.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN CRISP
(Director),
Stamford Brayham Limited,
38 Pine Walk, Carshalton Beeches,
Surrey SM5 4HD.
February 23.

From Mr Clive Henderson

Sir, Far from automatically softening up or bouncing the British people for entry into the euro, yesterday's "change of gear" will create a culture of being in the euro without actually being so, thereby making it easier to consider the pros and cons at the referendum.

This will be an advantage over the preparation that France, Germany, etc, did not have in the run-up to the euro's introduction. We British don't have to imagine how the euro would perform and the evolving consequences.

We will be able to actually see and feel them.

Yours faithfully,
CLIVE HENDERSON,
Minos House,
Naylors Road, Liverpool L27 2YA.
February 24.

'Mindless' plan to raze Yatscombe

From Professor P. J. Parsons, FBA, and others

Sir, Yatscombe, the house on Boars Hill near Oxford which was for 38 years the home of the Greek scholar and internationalist, Gilbert Murray, is threatened with demolition, and we write to argue for its protection on historical grounds.

As Oxford's Regius Professor of Greek from 1908 to 1936 Murray won an esteem unique in his own time, and scarcely equalled since the Renaissance, as a public interpreter of Greek culture to the English-speaking world.

He was simultaneously a tireless force in humane politics. As a former delegate to the League of Nations and President of the League of Nations Union, he helped draft the UN Charter in 1945, and championed innumerable causes whose justice we now take for granted but which needed visionaries to promote them then: women's suffrage and education (he helped establish Somerville College), famine relief (Murray and his wife, Lady Mary — the original of Shaw's Major Barbara — were among the founders of Oxfam), concern for refugees (many of them personally welcomed at Yatscombe and its lodge), and the prevention of cruelty to animals.

The names of visitors to Yatscombe make an enlightened *Who's Who* of the period, including Einstein, Wells, Russell, Shaw, Chesterton, Gandhi, Tagore, Masefield, Toynbee, Aldous Huxley, Madame Curie, Lawrence of Arabia, and so many more that it is hard to name an English house with more dazzling associations from those years.

To knock the house down unnecessarily — and it *is* unnecessary, since the proposal is only to put another one in its place as part of a scheme to turn a big neighbouring property into flats — appears to us to be a mindless insult to the values Gilbert Murray represented, values we still all depend on and whose monuments we should treat with respect.

Yours faithfully,
P. J. PARSONS,
Regius Professor of Greek,
University of Oxford,
DAVID BRYER,
Director, Oxfam,
F. CALDICOTT,
Principal, Somerville College, Oxford,
P. E. EASTERLING,
Regius Professor of Greek,
University of Cambridge,
PHILLIP EDWARDS,
Chairman, Boars Hill Branch,
Oxford Preservation Trust,
EVAN HARRIS,
Liberal Democrat MP for
Oxford West and Abingdon,
ALEXANDER MURRAY,
Grandson,
c/o Half Acre,
Boars Hill, Oxford OX1 5EZ.
February 22.

Politics in Zimbabwe

From Mr Terence Miller

Sir, Mr Barrie Milnes (letter, February 18) refers to "the destruction of civilised, responsible rule in ... Rhodesia". My recollection is of a situation of "soft" apartheid, acceptable to supporters of the Rhodesian Front Government, but hardly "civilised" by any other standard.

As to "responsible" — responsible to whom? Certainly not to the black majority, nor, since in its latter years the regime was in a state of rebellion, to the Crown.

Mr Milnes asks for expressions of remorse or regret. For my part, I do not regret the abolition of the illegal regime and the establishment of an independent African state. I do, however, regret the subsequent emergence of yet another example of Acton's "Law", that power tends to corrupt.

Yours etc,
TERENCE MILLER
(Principal, University College of Rhodesia, 1967-69),
Plough House,
Sedgeford, Norfolk PE36 5LR.
February 19.

From the Acting High Commissioner of Zimbabwe

Sir, Your correspondent in Harare alleges (report, February 18) that President Robert Mugabe "is set on a potentially bloody course as he attempts to retain power". Curiously such predictions have become the norm in your paper — today's leading article is another example.

The allegation that President Mugabe intends to "crush" the independent media should be dismissed with the contempt it deserves. It is surprising that whenever newspapers that support our Government disagree with the "independent" press this is always seen as an attack on freedom of expression.

On February 6, in his address to the nation, President Mugabe remarked that a political environment of freedom should not be the responsibility of the State alone. He said:

> What is my freedom must necessarily also translate into the freedom of my neighbour. Similarly, what is my right must be recognised as the equal right of my neighbour, which is why all of us in society whether we are politicians, economists, churchpeople, journalists or writers, have the duty to recognise that mutual or reciprocal relationship — that we all have rights, we all have freedom and, accordingly, we all have the responsibility, to recognise each other's rights and freedoms, bearing in mind that no one in society has more rights than the other.

It has become clear that certain sections of the media are itching for a change of government in Zimbabwe — at all costs. The country will be holding parliamentary elections next year, while presidential elections will take place in 2002. Those who feel very strongly that there must be a government of their own choice are free to participate as long as they are Zimbabweans and have the right to vote.

Yours faithfully,
P. T. MUSAKA,
High Commission of the
Republic of Zimbabwe,
Zimbabwe House,
429 Strand, WC2R 0SA.
February 22.

From Mr John Whitmore

Sir, Having just returned from a stay on a white farm in Zimbabwe I hasten to echo the sentiments expressed by Mr Barrie Milnes.

This once great land is now a shambles. Corruption and inefficiency are rampant at every level of administration. The infrastructure is collapsing — telephones often don't work, the roads are in disrepair, electricity supplies intermittent. Inflation and interest rates are at unbelievable levels.

All the country's ills are blamed on the white "settlers", especially the farmers (who produce a substantial proportion of Zimbabwe's foreign earnings). Over 800 of them have received letters saying that their farms now belong to the Government. Despite IMF intervention, these letters have not been withdrawn.

Yours sincerely,
JOHN WHITMORE,
Perryhill,
Hartfield, Sussex TN7 4JP.

From Mr Stuart Hutchinson

Sir, One of the great tragedies of a country like Zimbabwe descending into chaos, as it seems inexorably to be doing, is that this is welcomed by those such as Mr Milnes as some kind of justification for the oppressive rule of the previous Government.

If one is in any doubt as to the repressive tendencies of the former regime, one need only note the fact that it was a law established by the Rhodesian Government to silence those "causing alarm and despondency" that has now been used as the means to incarcerate the journalists Mark Chavunduka and Ray Choto, among others (reports, February 8 and 9).

Freedom of speech is a right for all which should be equally defended under both colonial and African rule: bad black government does not justify bad white government.

Yours faithfully,
STUART HUTCHINSON,
62 Kings Road,
Richmond, Surrey TW10 6EP.
stu.hutchinson@btinternet.com
February 18.

International debt

From Dr Ben Wood

Sir, The Archbishop of Westminster (letter, February 16) asks that statesmen attending the G7 summit in June should take the vital step towards halving the proportion of the world's population living in absolute poverty by 2015.

One would have much more sympathy with these views if the cardinal's Church allowed its flock the contraceptive means to take the vital step towards halving the world's population as a whole in the not-too-distant future.

Yours sincerely,
BEN WOOD,
3 Kingsfield,
Lymington, Hampshire SO41 3QY.
February 16.

Names and numbers

From Mr Gregory Szanto

Sir, I see that another bastion of individuality, the customising of car numberplates, is to be the target of the forces of law and order (letter from Mr Richard Tweed, February 20).

No doubt when we, too, are provided with identification numbers, any attempt at individuality will likewise be met with the same coercive insistence on conformity.

Yours democratically,
GREGORY SZANTO,
Eastbourne Chambers,
15 Hyde Gardens,
Eastbourne, East Sussex BN21 4PR.
February 20.

From Mr John Chambers

Sir, One-word numberplates would need to be carefully chosen. If plates such as ELVIS (mentioned by Mr Tweed) were permitted how would we avoid confusion with currently valid marks such as ELV 1S and ELV 15?

Yours faithfully,
J. P. CHAMBERS,
24 Green Lane,
Tadworth, Surrey KT20 6TL.
February 22.

Letters for publication may be faxed to 0171-782 5046. e-mail to: *letters@the-times.co.uk*

BBC drama

From Mr Alan Yentob, Director of Television, BBC Broadcast

Sir, Stephen Poliakoff is a terrific writer and a fierce champion of cultural values, so I appreciate his concern that there may be a "dearth of drama in the BBC's autumn/winter schedules" (article, Metro, February 13) — but he is worrying unnecessarily.

BBC Television is investing more in drama, and this year's spend is up by 10 per cent on last year — an increase of £17 million — so it is not true to say that our drama output is the lowest in our history.

We are proud of BBC-TV's autumn and winter schedules, which have included *The Cops*, Alan Bennett's *Talking Heads* and *Vanity Fair*, plus the television premieres of six original feature films from BBC Films. As I write, we are about to launch Tony Grounds's bold series, *Births, Marriages and Deaths*, and Kay Mellor's outstanding second series of *Playing the Field*.

Stephen is also wrong in his belief that we have only "three or four productions over the next two years". We have ten major new dramas — including Peter Kosminsky's *Peacekeepers*, *In A Land of Plenty*, *Gormenghast*, *Wives and Daughters*, *All The King's Men* and *Nature Boy* — already in the making, and further commissions are in the pipeline.

Television makes for a crowded landscape, so I can understand Stephen missing some of the high points: but his fears are unfounded.

Yours faithfully,
ALAN YENTOB,
Director of Television,
BBC Broadcast,
BBC Television Centre,
Wood Lane, W12 7RJ.
February 17.

From Mr Martin Pope

Sir, Your article on Stephen Poliakoff states that my film, *Alive & Kicking*, "had only played for about a week in the cinema" before it was screened by Channel 4 last Christmas.

In fact, it ran for over a month in the West End in the summer of 1997, followed by a national release, and for several months in the US. It has received four Most Popular Film awards, two Best Actor awards and a recent Grand Prix at a festival in France.

Contrary to the suggestion in the article, *Alive & Kicking* was commercially financed with Film On Four, without any recourse to money from the National Lottery.

Yours sincerely,
MARTIN POPE
(Producer, *Alive & Kicking*),
Martin Pope Productions Limited,
83 John Ruskin Street, SE5 0PQ.
February 19.

Queen's governess

From Mrs J. M. Bury

Sir, The caption to the watercolour illustrating your article on Baroness Lehzen (February 6; see also letters, February 16) states that it shows Queen Victoria "at the age of 18 with her courtiers". This is a nonsense. It is Victoria's sketch of herself with Archbishop Howley, Lord Melbourne carrying the Sword of State and the bearers of her regalia at the start of her Coronation in June 1838.

I wish I had known of the sketch when I contributed an account of the Coronation to *The Crown Jewels* (Stationery Office, 1998). Instead, I illustrated it with a drawing by the Queen of herself at prayer, in identical costume and headdress (see also Marina Warner, *Queen Victoria's Sketchbook*, Macmillan, 1979).

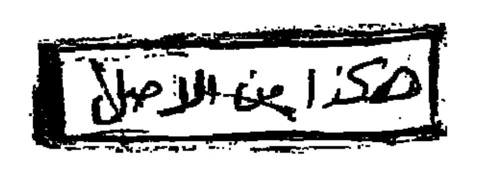
Yours faithfully,
SHIRLEY BURY,
5 Tasker Road, NW3 2YR.
February 8.

Genes and Genesis

From Mr Chris Bateman

Sir, Just think what God could have achieved if only he'd had the expertise of Monsanto and the support of new Labour.

Yours faithfully,
CHRIS BATEMAN,
9a Redcliffe Road, Mapperley Park,
Nottingham NG3 5BW.
chris.bateman@virgin.net
February 23.





COURT CIRCULAR

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
February 24: His Excellency Mr César B. Bautista was received in audience by The Queen today and presented the Letters of Recall of his predecessor and his own Letters of Credence as Ambassador of the Philippines to the Court of St James's.

His Excellency was accompanied by the following members of the Embassy:

Mrs Maria Rowena Mendoza Sanchez (Deputy Chief of Commission & Consul General), Mrs Maria Zeneida Angara-Collinson (Minister), Mr Gilberto Asuque (First Secretary and Consul), Colonel Pedro Ike Inserto (Defence and Armed Forces Attaché), Miss Lilybeth Deapera (Third Secretary and Vice-Consul), Mr Eduardo Jarque, Jr (Attaché) and Mr Vicente Casim (Commercial Attaché). Mr Christopher Hum (Deputy Under-Secretary and Chief Clerk, Foreign and Commonwealth Office) was present.

Mrs Maria Paz D. Bautista was also received by The Queen.

The Prime Minister of Tuvalu was received by The Queen.

The Queen, accompanied by The Duke of Edinburgh, attended "Symphony 21" — a celebration in music and dance of the Institute's vision for the 21st Century at the Commonwealth Institute, London, this afternoon.

ST JAMES'S PALACE
February 24: The Prince of Wales, President, The Foundation for Integrated Medicine, this morning hosted a seminar with the Association of Medical Research Councils.

His Royal Highness, Duke of Cornwall, this afternoon received the Chairman of Duchy Originals, Mr Guy McCraken.

The Prince of Wales, President, Business in the Community, this afternoon received the Chief Executive, Miss Julia Cleverdon.

His Royal Highness, Chairman, The Queen's Awards Review Committee, later presided over the first meeting of the Committee.

The Prince of Wales, President, The Prince's Trust, this evening attended the Eddie Izzard show, "Dressed to Kill", at Wembley Arena, London.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
February 24: The Prince Edward, Trustee, this morning chaired a meeting of the Working Committee of the Trustees of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award International Foundation at Buckingham Palace.

His Royal Highness, Trustee, this afternoon attended a meeting of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Finance and Administration Committee at 6 Stratton Street, London W1.

The Prince of Wales this evening attended the annual dinner of The Body of Yeoman Warders of Her Majesty's Royal Palace & Fortress The Tower of London at the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers' Headquarters, The Tower of London.

February 24: The Princess Royal, Patron, National Association of Victim Support Schemes, today attended the launch of the Bobby Scheme at Surrey County Cricket Club, The Oval, Kennington, London.

Her Royal Highness, Royal Honorary Colonel, University of London Officers Training Corps, this afternoon received Brigadier Kim Ross upon relinquishing his appointment as Honorary Colonel and Brigadier Richard Heyward upon assuming the appointment.

The Princess Royal this evening attended a Reception at St James's Palace for Benenden School's 75th Anniversary.

THATCHED HOUSE LODGE
February 24: Princess Alexandra this morning visited the Cassel Hospital to mark the beginning of the building of the new Families Centre at Ham Common, Richmond, Surrey.

Her Royal Highness this afternoon inaugurated an Exhibition of the work of Augustus John at Olympia, West London.

Princess Alexandra, accompanied by the Rt Hon Sir Angus Ogilvy, this evening attended a Dinner in aid of "Children with Special Needs in Egypt" at the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, London.

Today's royal engagements

The Duke of Edinburgh, senior trustee, will attend a quarterly meeting of the trustees of the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, at 10.00, followed by luncheon: and will attend a concert and dinner for Arts and Nature, The Alliance of Religions and Conservation and the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra Foundation, at Buckingham Palace, at 6.00.

The Princess Royal, as president, The Princess Royal Trust for Carers, will attend the Borders Carers Day at the Roxburghe Hotel, Heiton, Kelso, Roxburghshire at noon; will visit N. Peal, Victoria Road, Hawick, Roxburghshire, at 2.00, and J. Scott, 16 Princes Street at 2.50. She will open the Glenview Children's Residential Home, Marigold Drive, Galashiels, Roxburghshire, at 3.45; and as patron, Victim Support Scotland, will attend a dinner at the Royal Bank of Scotland, St Andrew Square, Edinburgh at 7.00.

The Duke of Gloucester, president, British Consultants Bureau, will attend the annual dinner at the Royal Thames Yacht Club, Knightsbridge, SW1, at 7.40.

The Duke of Kent will visit the Central Science Laboratory of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food at Sand Hutton, Yorkshire, at 10.00.

Miss Kathleen Robinson

A memorial service for Miss Kathleen Robinson will be held in The Royal Free Hospital Chapel on Tuesday, March 23, at 12.30pm.

Lectures

Marlborough Lent Lecture
The Archbishop of Canterbury delivered the 1999 Marlborough Lent lecture last night at Marlborough Town Hall to the Marlborough community.

Company of World Traders'
Mr Peter Job, Chief Executive of Reuters, delivered the annual Company of World Traders' Tacitus lecture to the company last night at Guildhall. Mr Sheriff Brian Harris and Mr Peter Wildblood, Master, were present.

RICHARD POHLE



A final check on one of the exhibits at the Mall Galleries, London, where the National Print Exhibition 1999, the largest of its kind, opened yesterday. It continues at the galleries, near Admiralty Arch, until March 6

Buckingham Palace Luncheon

The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh held a lunch party at Buckingham Palace yesterday. The guests were:

The Hon Mrs Justice Ebsworth, High Court Judge, Queen's Bench Division; Dr DeAnne Julius, Monetary Policy Committee, Bank of England; Sir James Black, Chancellor, Dundee University; Sir Richard Evans, chairman, British Aerospace; Mr Duncan Kenworthy, film producer; Canon David Price, Rector of Wimborne Minster; and Mr Robin Young, Permanent Secretary, Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

St Helen's School, Northwood

In celebration of the School's Centenary, a number of special events are being held in the coming months. The Centenary Ball is on Saturday, April 24, at School, with tickets available to parents, Old Girls and friends of the School. The Old Girls' Club is holding its Centenary Dinner at Glaziers' Hall on Friday, May 7, followed, on May 8-9, by Old Girls' Day and Celebration Sunday, both to be held at School. The School will also be holding a Service of Thanksgiving at St Helen's, Bishopsgate, on Wednesday, May 12. For anyone interested in attending these events further details may be obtained from the School on 01923 828511.

Service dinner

Yeoman Warders
Prince Edward attended the annual dinner of the Body of Yeoman Warders held last night at HM Royal Palace and Fortress the Tower of London. The principal guests were:

Lord Camoys, Field Marshal Lord Inge, Lieutenant-General Sir Anthony Denison-Smith, Major-General Geoffrey Field, Major-General E J Webb-Carter, Brigadier M Hundley, Brigadier J H Griffin, Colonel I S Mercer, Lieutenant-Colonel S Watts, Colonel Brian Toye, General Freddie Franks, Major H R McMaster, US Army, Mr Tom Clancy and Lieutenant-Colonel Sean O'Dwyer.

Appointment

Press Complaints Commission
Ms Alison Hastings, Editor of the Evening Chronicle in Newcastle, has been appointed a member of the Press Complaints Commission.

The Institution of Civil Engineers

The Institution of Civil Engineers announces that the following candidates have been admitted to Corporate Membership, Associate Membership and Technician Membership following the successful completion of the 1998 Autumn session of the Professional Reviews:

Corporate Members
Abrams R J, Adams S J, Ali U, Amerigo L, Ardrey A G, Armstrong RRHMP S, Arnison * G, Ashton T, Audsley R C, Awoleye E O A, Baker S P, Baldock Y N, Barge S J, Beadle E C, Bell E A, Bird C J, Blake S S, Bolam P A, Booher K L J, Branigan C E, Bridge J M, Broadley G T, Bryce G, Bu-Rashid J, Burnett R M, Burnside D R, Burrow R, Burt A D, Cai J G, Cannon W C, Carr J H, Carter T L, Cartwright P A, Cavell D G, Chalmers B L, Chan H C, Chapman G, Chaudhry A A, Chu C L, Cliffe * K M, Clifford R H, Clough R A, Clubbe J J, Cobb A R, Cochrane D G M, Coe R J, Cole J D, Collard-Jenkins S J, Collier F, Colven * D F, Conlon B T, Corben P R, Corley J E, Corney R, Cox D P, Craddock L P, Dailey S M, Davies R J M, Davis C J, Deakin G J, Devine D L, Dewick G D, Dick G J, Dirdal E, Dixon J G, Dixon M R, Donaldson W D, Dungworth D S, Dunne N J, Eavery T E, Ebadi M, Elson J C, Fairley T J, Farrow A J, Farrugia * C, Feder L J P, Field G R, Finch V E N, Fletcher S J, Flynn D E, Foote J S, Gell H P, Gibson C T C, Gilmour A J, Gledhill L V, Goodall D R, Goodwin M S, Gould M.

Graham J K, Greatorex J W, Green M A, Grey C J, Grout L M, Guild J M, Hardie N G C, Harlow A C, Headworth M J, Herbert C F, Hind V A, Hoare P D, Hockley P J, Hodgson J M, Hodgson J, Holton C J, Hood S S, Hooker D P, Hopper C M, Horrocks S C, Howard C P A, Hughes M W, Hunter C W, Hurt J C, Idris K K H, Ilett E J, Innes N J, Jackson D E, James C, James J K, Jarvis * S P, Jeanes M J F, Johnson M C, Jones A D, Jones C C, Jones M R, Joseph C M, Kearney D J, Kearney G A, Kelly D, Kelly M P J, Kemm P St J, Kenchington A W, Kersley C A, Khaliq J L, Kinsey K J, Kite J W, Koefman L M, Kraven A P, Law K C, Lawton T R, Leach S, Lennox W M, Leslie-Carter R M, Lister * R N W, Litler G R, Llewellyn D H, Lowiss D C, Lumbroso D M, MacDowall A, Mann S K, Markey K A, Marley P R, Marlow K L, Marquand P, Marr R N, Mawhinney S M, McCann E J, McCarthy * A, McNicol C D, McQue T P, Merrilees K F, Miles P N, Miller P R, illigan G G, Morley T A, Morton E J, Mountford J, Mulligan E S, Murdie G S, Murray H J, Noakes C G, Noble P J, O'Connor B, Ogden P A, Orr I R J, Osmer V A, Page G A, Palan V, Palmer A L, Pearson C H, Pegram G F, Pennington J M, Phipps * J M, Pike J R, Plumb C, Powell C, Pownall H J W, Price R A, Ramsay A A, Rawat A R, Reade M J, Remnant P S, Rendell M, Riddell B, Roberts M B, Roberts N G, Robinson N J C, Robson G W, Rogerson C N, Ross M L, Ruddy J E, Rushton C J, Russell N J, Ryan L S, Sanders K J, Schofield L M, Schofield R, Self D A, Setchfield S P, Sharp J E, Shields C R, Simcock P J D, Simpson L T, Sims M P, Sleath M W J, Small D M, Smart G P, Smith G A, Smith I M, Smith M R, Smith M R, Smith P W J, Spence M P.

Spencer D J, Stienler P V, Swallow R W, Taylor D, Taylor J, Thomas A J, Thomas A H, Thomas M S, Thomson P, Todd A S, Treen D J, Turnbull N, Turner A S, Vaghani K, Vaughan * M J, Ventimiglia T, Wamaziri S C, Way S, Weir A G, Wensley J K, White * A M, White W J, Whitefield O D, Whitehead R G, Whitfield P, Whitaker D E, Williams RRHMP L T, Williams C R, Williams D W, Williams R G, Wilmot-Smith C L, Wilson D R, Wilson E, Windsor D M, Winterbourn S, Withington * M A, Woods N P, Zadeh-Kochek A.

Associate Members
Barwise A M, Beckett N A, Brend D J, Burford A G, Clark L, Clewer M A, Collier H, Cooper * D R, Cowperthwaite C N, Croft A C, Cunliffe D H, Dawson C R, Drummond J A H, Earl * J L, Greenstreet A E, Hinton A M, Ingram T S, Jenkins C R, Kazab A O, Kenwright M J, Knight * P D, Laird S C, Lane A, Lees C M, Leonard A J, Lewis M D, MacKenzie S A, Marsland S J, Ogden D, Parrish S, Roberts J M, Rooney D P, Segasby T M, Shade V J, Sharkey P A, Spencer E M, Sutton A J, Thomas S G, Viles D J, Wheele A J, Williams B G, Wilson S, Wolstencroft J T, Woodgate E C.

Technician members
Bennett D M, Brooks J S, Brunell P M, Butler S, Carter L J, Charters S J, Chesher G L, Clark C J, Coulling E A, Cumberland D P, Francioso E, Heatley J W, Lee G L, Lewis L, Mackenzie S D, Postle K R, Reynolds R A, Standish M J, Vallis C J, Webb S P.

RRHMP denotes those candidates who have won the Renee Redfern Hunt Memorial Prize: an asterisk (*) denotes those candidates who were commended on the standard of their essay(s).

Farriers' Company

Mr T.F.M. Head, Master of the Farriers' Company, and Mr H.J. Cooper, Chairman of the Farriers Registration Council, jointly presided at a presentation ceremony held last Friday in the Great Hall of St Bartholomew's Hospital, West Smithfield.

The Master presented the company's Fellowship to Mr Christopher Gregory (Missouri, US), and Mr Andrew Poynton, and presented the Associateship to Mr Richard Spence. Mr Dean Bland and Mr David Lynch (Republic of Ireland) received Diploma Certificates with Honours and the Oliver Award Silver Medal. Company Diploma Certificates were presented to Gunner P.R. Hodgkinson, of the King's Troop RHA, Farriers Lance Corporals of Horse I.A. McGregor and N.J. Varley, of the Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment.

The Master also presented the company's diploma and council's Registration Certificates to candidates at Herefordshire College of Technology and Warwick College after their examination in November 1998 and January 1999. The Chairman of the Farriers Registration Council also spoke.

A service was held earlier at the Priory Church of St Bartholomew-the-Great attended by candidates, approved training farriers and their families and friends.

Dinners

Portuguese UK Chamber of Commerce
The Ambassador of Portugal presided at a dinner of the Portuguese UK Chamber of Commerce held yesterday at the Hyatt Carlton Tower Hotel to mark the signing of a new protocol. Eng Diogo Tavares, Vice-President of ICEP, the Portuguese Foreign Trade Body, was the guest speaker.

ICPD
The inaugural dinner of the Institute of Continuing Professional Development (ICPD) was held last night at Middle Temple Hall. Sir Leonard Peach, chairman, presided. Lord Palumbo and Lord Paul also spoke.

Foundation for Science and Technology
Mr William J. Todd, Sir Roy McNulty and Sir Kenneth Bloomfield were the speakers at a lecture and dinner discussion of the Foundation for Science and Technology held last night at Ulster University. Lord Jenkin of Roding, chairman of the council of the foundation, presided.

Luncheons

Carlton Club Political Committee
Dr Liam Fox, Opposition Spokesman for Constitutional Affairs, was the principal guest and speaker at a luncheon of the Political Committee of the Carlton Club held yesterday at the club. Mr Simon Mabey, chairman of the committee, presided and Mr Simon O'Toole also spoke.

Consular Corps of London
Mr Charles Stevens, HM Chief Immigration Officer, was the guest of honour and speaker at a luncheon of the Consular Corps of London held yesterday at the Hyatt Carlton Tower Hotel. Mr Lawrence Landau, president, was in the chair.

Meeting

Royal Institute of International Affairs
Ms Rita Fan, President of the Legislative Council of Hong Kong, was the speaker at a meeting of the Royal Institute of International Affairs held yesterday at Chatham House. Professor Michael Yabuda presided.

Forthcoming marriages

Mr O.S.M. Crowther and Miss J.K. O'Hare
The engagement is announced between Oliver, youngest son of Mr and Mrs Michael Crowther, of Poynings, Sussex, and Jacqueline, daughter of Mr and Mrs Gerry O'Hare, of Portslade, Sussex.

Mr J.H. Davies and Miss J.B. Humberston
The engagement is announced between Jonathan, son of Mr and Mrs V.W.H. Davies, of Bargoed, Caerphilly, and Joanna, daughter of Dr and Mrs J.W. Humberston, of Epping, Essex.

Mr J.D.E. Dixon and Mrs H. de Charles
The engagement is announced and the marriage will take place shortly between Julian Dixon and Hobblette de Charles.

Mr M. Fontein and Miss R. Smith
The engagement is announced between Mark, younger son of Dr and Mrs Bart Fontein, of Haarlem, Holland, and Rebecca, elder daughter of Dr and Mrs Timothy Smith, of Reading, Berkshire.

Captain M.C. Gidlow-Jackson and Miss S.L. Edmonds
The engagement is announced between Captain Mark Gidlow-Jackson, The Devonshire and Dorset Regiment, son of the late Mr and Mrs Charles Gidlow-Jackson, and Lucy, daughter of Lieutenant Commander and Mrs Michael Edmonds, of Titchfield, Hampshire.

Mr A. Hjorth and Miss L.M. Denison
The engagement is announced between Anders, son of Mr and Mrs Sven-Gunnar Hjorth, of Taby, Sweden, and Lucinda Mary, daughter of Mr Michael Denison, of Soberton, Hampshire, and Mrs Michael Poland, of Upham, Hampshire.

Mr D.P. Hodgkins and Miss S.F. Smith
The engagement is announced between Dean, son of Mr and Mrs Peter Hodgkins, of Deal, Kent, and Susan, daughter of Mr and Mrs Ronald Smith, of Woking, Surrey.

Mr A.J. Kasket and Miss E.P. Rudwell
The engagement is announced between Alan, son of Mr and Mrs Harold Kasket, of West Hampstead, London, and Elaine, eldest daughter of Dr and Mrs George Rudwell, of Jeffersonville, Indiana, USA.

Mr C.J. Rees-Williams and Miss C.E.C. Mikhailoff
The engagement is announced between Christopher, youngest son of the late Mr Geoffrey Rees-Williams and of Mrs Rees-Williams, of Sevenoaks, Kent, and Caroline, only daughter of Mr and Mrs Paul Mikhailoff, of Sevenoaks, Kent.

Mr S.E. Thomas and Miss V.K. Hunt
The engagement is announced between Scott Edwin, son of Mr and Mrs Edwin Roosevelt Thomas, of St Louis, Missouri, and Victoria Katharine, daughter of Mr and Mrs James Hunt, of Easton Hall, Stamford, Lincolnshire.

Mr T.D.B. Treacher and Miss M.L. Davies
The engagement is announced between Toby, only son of Admiral Sir John and Lady Treacher, of 22 Newton Road, London W2, and Melissa, only daughter of Dr and Mrs Roger Davies, of Colchester, Essex.

Mr N.J. Trotter and Miss S.J. Estcourt
The engagement is announced between Neil, elder son of Mr and Mrs Norman Trotter, of Wallington, Surrey, and Suzannah, elder daughter of Mr Adrian Estcourt, of Chiddingfold, Surrey, and Mrs Judy Estcourt, of Menethorpe, Malton, Yorkshire.

Mr R.P. Wachman and Miss M.M. Weightman
The engagement is announced between Robert, only son of Mr and Mrs Nicholas Wachman, of Clonbullogue, Co Offaly, Ireland, and Madeleine, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs Simon Weightman, of Old Burdon, Co Durham.

Mr W.A.W. Weightman and Miss C.R. Scott
The engagement is announced between William, elder son of Mr and Mrs Simon Weightman, of Old Burdon, Co Durham, and Catherine, younger daughter of Dr and Mrs Thomas Scott, of Hepscott, Northumberland.

Marriage

Lord Mowbray and Stourton and Joan, Lady Holland
The marriage of Lord Mowbray and Stourton and Joan, Lady Holland has taken place quietly in Warwickshire. Dom Aidan Bellenger officiated, assisted by Father Mortimer Loftus.

Birthdays today

Miss Jane Ackroyd, sculptor, 42; Miss Elkie Brooks, singer, 54; Mr Tom Courtenay, actor, 62; Lord Crickhowell, 65; Sir Antony Duff, former diplomat, 79; Sir Alex Gordon, architect, 82; Mr George Harrison, musician, composer and film producer, 56; Mr Edward Kellett-Bowman, MEP, 68; Vice-Admiral Sir Roderick Macdonald, artist, 78; Dr Harvey McGregor, QC, former Warden, New College, Oxford, 73; Mr Hector MacKenzie, trade unionist, 59; Mr Robert Neame, brewer, 65; Major-General Sir Laurence New, 67; Sir Roger Parker, former Lord Justice of Appeal, 76; Mr George Paul, chairman, Norwich Union, 59; Lord Puttnam, 58; Lord Sempill, 50; Lieutenant-Colonel J.R. Stephenson, former secretary, MCC, 68; Professor Sir Stewart Sutherland, FBA, Principal and Vice-Chancellor, Edinburgh University, 58; Mr A.C.F. Verity, former Master, Dulwich College, 60; Sir Ian Wallace, company chairman, 83; Dr G.B. Warren, biochemist, 51; Sir Michael Wheeler-Booth, former Clerk of the Parliaments, 65; Marshal of the RAF Sir Keith Williamson, 71.

Anniversaries

BIRTHS: Pierre Renoir, Impressionist painter, Limoges, France, 1841; Enrico Caruso, tenor, Naples, 1873; John Foster Dulles, American statesman, Washington DC, 1888; Dame Myra Hess, pianist, London, 1890.

DEATHS: Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, soldier and courtier, executed in London, 1601; Sir Christopher Wren, architect, London, 1723; William Buchan, physician, London, 1805; Paul Julius von Reuter, founder of the news agency, Nice, 1899; Sir John Tenniel, illustrator and cartoonist, London, 1914; Tennessee Williams, playwright, New York, 1983.

Queen Elizabeth I was excommunicated by Pope Pius V, 1570.

Paper currency, known as "greenbacks", was introduced in the United States by President Abraham Lincoln, 1862.

Andrew Johnson, 17th American President 1865-69, was impeached (acquitted in May), 1868.

The first Anderson bomb shelter to be built in Britain was erected in an Islington garden, 1939.

BMDS: 0171 680 6880
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FAX: 0171 481 9313

If you repay good with evil, you will never get evil out of your house. Proverbs 17.13 (GNB).

BIRTHS

ADDISON - On February 17th, to Richard and Philippa (née Wahlen) a daughter, Rebecca Harriet Amelia, sister to William and Oliver.

BERESFORD - On February 9th 1999, to Rosalind (née Burbridge) and Richard, a son, Montgomery Charles Delaval.

CAHILL WELSTEAD - On February 23rd 1999 at St Mary's Hospital, London, to Verity and Michael, a beautiful daughter, Grace Finty, a sister for Hannah.

HOOPER - On 19th February 1999, to Sophie (née Bird) and Charles, a daughter, Rosie Tabitha Jane.

HOUSE - On 22nd February 1999, to Jane (née Spencer-Jones) and Tim, twin sons, J.E. Alexander and W.C. Oliver.

LYONS - On February 17th, to Sophie (née Pilcher) and Seamus, a daughter, Katherine "Kitty" Flora Cecily, a sister for Otto and Milo.

PEERS - On 18th February, to Anthony and Nichola (née Heywood-Lonsdale), a daughter.

WADDILOVE - On February 16th 1999, to Annie (née Dean) and Jake, a son, Toby Douglas, a brother for Joshua.

WILLIAMS - On 15th February at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital, to Gail (née de la Rue) and Don, a son, Angus Scott, a brother for Ella.

DEATHS

BERGER - John. Passed peacefully away at the Nuffield Hospital, Taunton, on Saturday, 20th February aged 85. Reunited with Alison, Ann and John. Funeral Service will be held at Taunton Deane Crematorium on Monday, 1st March at 2pm. Donations may be sent to E. White & Son, Funeral Directors, 138-139 East Reach, Taunton, for the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, Slimbridge, Gloucestershire.

BOWDEN - Victor Edward, DFC and Bar, FRCO (CHM), ADCM, LRAM. Died 20th February 1999. Requiem Mass at The Church of The Sacred Heart, Norton Road, Hove on Monday 1st March at 3pm. 'Jesu mercy, Mary pray'. Private cremation. No flowers. Donations for The Royal College of Organist's may be sent to Christopher Stringer Funeral Services, 67, High Street, Rottingdean, East Sussex, BN2 7HE. Tel: 01273-306000.

BROWN - See Gordon-Brown.

BUNTON - (Née Brooks) Louise Phillippa Bennett aged 46 on 19th February. Devoted wife of the late George and much loved sister of Richard and Susan. Sadly missed by many friends. Service to be held on Friday 26th February 12 noon at St Nicolas Church, Cranleigh, Surrey, followed by a private committal. All enquiries to Pimms Funeral Service. (01483) 274079.

COCKERILL - Mary, 44 years, after a short illness, on 19th February. Beloved mother of Monique and sister of David and Peter. Funeral at 10.30 on Tuesday, 2nd March at Worth Abbey, near Crawley, Sussex. The coffin will be placed in the Abbey Church from 1730 on Monday, 1st March. All are welcome to pay their respects. Donations please, in lieu of flowers, for the Julius Uganda Appeal Fund, Worth Abbey.

COOK - Peacefully on 23rd February after a gallant struggle, Captain Edward Lewis (Gerald) D.S.C., RN. Rtd. Husband of the late Diana and of Kay, widow of the late Commander E.F. Langer. Father of Rosemary and stepfather of Keith. Funeral Service at Sternfield Church, Suffolk on Friday 5th March at 11.30 am followed by private cremation. Family flowers only, but donations if desired made payable to The Mission to Seamen c/o Tony Brown Funeral Service, Saxmundham, Suffolk IP17 1DJ.

COOPER - On Thursday February 18th 1999, Joan, formerly of Wytherton and latterly of Meadowcroft, Cambridge. Sadly missed by all her friends and especially Jean Smith of Crossway Gardens, Trumpington, Cambridge. Service is to be at St Mark's Church, Barton Road, Cambridge, on March 3rd at 12 noon. Family flowers only, but donations for The Samaritans Cambridge Branch, may be sent to Brian Warner Funeral Service, 4 Harshel Court, Hartington Grove, Cambridge, CB1 7UB.

DACK - Walter Sydney Dack, 90, Lexington, Kentucky, USA, died Sunday, February 21st, 1999 at St Joseph East Hospital. Born October 31st, 1908 in London, England, he was a son of the late George and Lillian Godfrey Dack. His beloved wife of 58 years, Clare passed away in June 1996. He worked in an engineering capacity in the British companies, AEC and Thornycroft during the 1920's and 1930's, and was intimately involved in the development of the London doubledeck buses. During World War II he worked in the Department of Tank Design in England before coming to the United States in 1947 to work for White Motor Company in Cleveland, OH. He took the position of North American sales engineering representative with the British company, Lucas Electrical Services in 1952 and remained with them until his retirement in 1973. He spent most of his retirement years in Sun City, AZ before moving to Lexington in November 1988 to be close to his only child, Stephen Dack and his wife, Judy Eskew Dack. He was an avid flyer from his early days in England when he flew biplanes in the 1930's. No services are planned. Kerr Brothers Funeral Home in Lexington, Kentucky, USA is in charge of arrangements. Memorials are suggested to one's favourite charity.

DARBY - Harry of Ravensmere Road, Redditch, born March 26th 1923, died February 19th 1999 in Selly Oak Hospital (M.I.U.) after a gallant fight following a major operation for aneurysm of the aorta. May he rest in peace, grow in love and rise in glory. Beloved husband of Sheila for nearly fifty years, caring father of Keith and the late Richard (1997), grandfather of Emma and Simon, good friend and neighbour who will be sadly missed. Funeral at Redditch Crematorium on Thursday 4th March at 2.00pm followed by refreshments at Studley Road Social Club, Redditch. Simple flowers please or donations to be divided between Selly Oak (M.I.U.) and Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust Slimbridge. Please make cheques payable to Huxley Funeral Service. All enquiries to Huxley Funeral Service, 11 William Street, Redditch (tel 01527 66661).

FARMER - Maurice, BCom, FCA, at home on 19th February 1999. Dearly loved. No flowers but donations if desired to Quarriers Caring For People, Quarriers Village, Bridge of Weir, Scotland PA11 3SX (tel 01505 616000 or 612224). Funeral Service at St Luke's Church, Eardley Road, Sevenoaks on Monday 1st March, 11 am followed by a private burial. Enquiries to Francis Chappell and Son, Sevenoaks, 01732 450203.

FRENCH - Died February 19th, aged 70, John A French. Funeral 12 noon St Nicholas Church, Lower Oddington, Tuesday 2nd March. No flowers please. Donations if desired to Bristol Cancer Help Centre, Clifton, Bristol BS8 4PG.

FRIEL - Lily MBE, JP, died suddenly at home on February 17th 1999 aged 85 years. The beloved wife of the late W.R.N. Friel (Milo), mother of the late Frances Jacob, Judy O'Donnell, Tony and the late Trishy, grandmother and great-grandmother. Service at Worcester Crematorium on Friday March 5th at 2 pm. No flowers. Donations if wished to St Johns Ambulance, Bromsgrove Division c/o 32 Fox Lane, Hill Top, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B61 7NL.

GILES - Alison Frances Zoe, widow of the late A.W. "Bill" Giles and mother of Christopher and Gordon, died on 21st February aged 92. Funeral on Tuesday 2nd March at 2 pm at St. Andrew's, Gatton (near Merstham). Family flowers only; donations please to Chercheffelle Housing Association Ltd., c/o Stoneman Funeral Directors, Reigate Road, Redhill, Surrey RH1 6AZ - 01737 763455.

GORDON-BROWN - Peacefully at Trowbridge on 24th February in his 92nd year, Dr. George, one-time medical superintendent of Whitecroft Hospital, Isle of Wight. Funeral Directors Barkers, 52 Bond Street, Trowbridge, Wilts.

HANNAY - Robert Fleming Suddenly but peacefully at home on 8th February aged 75. Much loved husband of Alison and father of Fiona, Glenda, the late Isobel, and Christian. Proud and loving grandfather of Jonathan, Caspian, Edmund, Alexander, Laura, Eleanor and Daisy. The funeral has taken place.

HARDING - Richard Whitfield Harding O.B.E. On 22nd February 1999 aged 75 years. Peacefully in hospital and of Warrington. The beloved brother of Beryl, Nancy and Gwen. Funeral service at St Elphin's Church Warrington on Tuesday 2nd March at 2 pm followed by cremation at Walton Lea Crematorium. Enquiries: Maddocks Funeral Service 01925 281803.

HITCHCOCK - Diana Vaughan peacefully at Hatleys on 22nd February. Widow of Robert, loved mother of Barry and Simon, grandmother and great-grandmother. Funeral at the Church of the Holy Cross, Felsted on Tuesday March 2nd at 12 noon. Family flowers only. Donations if desired to 'Gardeners Royal Benevolent Society' c/o Daniel Robinson & Sons Ltd., Haslers Lane, Gt. Dunmow, Essex CM6 1XS.

KIRCHNER - Monica Mary Teresa née Egan, formerly of Brent Pelham, died peacefully at Margaret House, Barley, Royston on February 22nd, aged 93 years. Devoted sister of the late Rev. Father Bernard Egan, S.J. Requiem Mass on Tuesday, March 2nd at 10 am at St Thomas of Canterbury Church, Royston, Herts followed by burial in Hare Street Catholic Cemetery. Enquiries to Cecil Newling Funeral Director of Royston, tel: 01763 243048.

LAWRANCE - Eluned (Lin) peacefully in hospital on Sunday 21st February. Formerly of Sarawak and Goring-on-Thames. Widow of Eric, much loved mother of Peter and Rosamund. Granny of Clare, Laura, Sally, Oliver and Joanna and dear sister of Elvera Burbeck. Service of Thanksgiving at St Mary's Church, Streatley at 3 pm on Thursday 4th March. Donations in lieu of flowers to R.N.L.I. c/o Woking Funeral Service Ltd., 121 Goldsworth Road, Woking GU21 1LR.

LYLE - Dr. Leonard Gordon. Donations if desired to: Shortlands Millennium Memorial Chapel Fund c/o H Copeland & Son Funeral Directors, 9 Bromley Road, Beckenham, Kent BR3 5NT and not as previously published.

MOIRA - Christopher Gerald, suddenly on Tuesday 23rd February. Much loved husband of Elizabeth, father of Caroline and Juliet and grandfather. Service of Thanksgiving to be held at St. Mary's, Stoneleigh, Warwickshire at 2pm on Monday 1st of March. Family flowers only please, donations if desired to Cancer Research, c/o W.G. Rathbone (Funeral Directors), 30 Clarendon Avenue, Leamington Spa, CV32 4RY.

PAYNE - On 22nd February suddenly at home in Harrogate, Alice (née Armstrong) aged 85. Beloved wife of the late Sir Reginald Withers Payne and mother of Stephen and the late Harold. Cremation in Harrogate on Friday 5th March at 3.40pm. Family flowers only. Donations in lieu to the RNLI, West Quay Road, Poole, Dorset BH15 1HZ.

PHILLIPS - David Chilton (The Lord Phillips of Ellesmere KBE FRS) aged 74 on Tuesday 23rd February 1999. Dearly loved husband of Diana, adored father of Sarah and grandpa to Sammy and Isabella. Family funeral at Golders Green Crematorium on Wednesday 3rd March at 11.30 am. Family flowers only please. Donations, if desired, to the Royal Marsden Hospital, London. Memorial Service to be arranged at a later date.

ROBERTS - On February 22nd Doctor Charles Glyn Roberts MBBS, aged 76. Husband of Margaret, father of Richard and Liz and grandfather of five. Beloved by us all. Private cremation. Thanksgiving Service at St Mary's Church, Hitchin on Monday 1st March at 2.30pm. No flowers please. Donations for Ward 9A Lister Hospital, made payable to N.M. Maxwell c/o Austins Funeral Service, 96 Bancroft, Hitchin, Herts. SG5 1NQ. Tel 01462 438422.

SALMON - Suddenly on 18th February Alice May Salmon aged 84 years. Beloved sister of Buzz. Funeral to be held at St Francis of Assisi Church Welwyn Garden City Hertfordshire at 2 pm on March 4th. Family flowers only please but donations if desired to Isabel Hospice Hall Grove Welwyn Garden City Hertfordshire AL7 4PH. Enquiries to Geo W Blow Church Street Welwyn Herts tel: 01438 714688.

SOUTHWORTH - Sir Frederick, beloved husband, father and grandfather. Peacefully on 22nd February 1999. Deeply loved and greatly missed.

TAYLOR - (née Doll), Margaret Marion (Miggs). Died peacefully at home on 22nd February aged 89. Dearly loved wife of Oliver, mother of Mary, Tony, Hilary, Jonathan and Charles. She will be greatly missed by all her extended family. Following a private family cremation service, there will be a thanksgiving service at St Mary's Church, Thame at 3.30 pm on Thursday, 4th March. Donations, if desired payable to Macmillan Cancer Relief, may be sent to F.J. Wilson, Greenway, Haddenham, Bucks. HP17 8BJ.

TAYLOR - On 22nd February in a tragic accident Nick aged 15, beloved son of Malcolm and Liz, adored brother of Jamie, Katy and Rob and friend to many who will miss him deeply. Funeral Service at Christchurch, Esher at 1.30pm Monday 1st March, followed by private burial. All friends welcome. A light has gone out.

TEBB - On February 22nd, suddenly at home, Harry Tebb MBE MSM aged 67. Beloved husband of Brenda (née Runalls).

VERNON - On February 23rd peacefully at Coxhill Manor, Chobham, Lady Nancy Vernon aged 100, much loved mother of Michael, grandmother of Mark and great-grandmother of Jessica, Phoebe and Wilfred. Funeral Service on 1st March 12 noon at St Michael's Church, Sunninghill. Family flowers only please. Donations if desired to RNLI c/o Cyril Lovegrove, 29C High Street, Sunninghill, Berks.

WATNEY - On 22nd February, peacefully at Little Court Nursing Home, Speldhurst, Louise, on the eve of her 92nd birthday, 6 months after her husband, Norman, to whom she devoted over 60 years. Family and friends will miss her sadly. Service at the Tunbridge Wells Crematorium on Tuesday 2nd March at 3.30 pm. Flowers or donations in lieu to Imperial Cancer Research Fund, c/o E.R. Hickmott & Son, 41 Grove Hill Road, Tunbridge Wells, TN1 1SD.

To place death notices, acknowledgements or notices please call 0171 680 6880

WILLIAMS - Peacefully on 21st February at Campion Gardens, Bishopston, Swansea. Mal, devoted father of Marilyn and John. Sadly missed by all the family. Resting at St James Funeral Home where a service will be held Tuesday 2nd March at 2 pm followed by interment at Oystermouth Cemetery 3.45 pm. Family flowers only please. Donations in lieu if so desired to The National Trust c/o St James Funeral Home, 31 St James Gardens, Uplands, Swansea SA1 6DT.

WILLIAMSON OSWALD - Ingleby Margaret Ann Major, second daughter of Brigadier General O. C. Williamson Oswald and Meta Carson of Carnalea House, Co Down died peacefully in her sleep on 19th February. Funeral Service at 2.00pm on 3rd March at Hither Green Crematorium, Verdant Lane, London SE6. Family flowers only. Donations if desired, to the RNIB c/o Francis Chappell and Sons, 5 Thomas Street, Woolwich, SE18. Tel 0181 854 0288.

ZEITLER - Ruby Violet (née Smith) of Botesdale, late of Didlington, Norfolk. Peacefully on February 21st in her 99th year. Funeral Service at the West Suffolk Crematorium, Bury St Edmunds on Thursday 4th March at 12 noon. Enquiries (01992) 582132.

IN MEMORIAM - PRIVATE

POTTER - Arthur CMG CBE. 25th February 1998. In loving memory.

BIRTHDAYS

WIZARD-B so faraway from me. Happy Birthday. Never forget [illegible]. Love your [illegible] XXX

OBITUARIES

DEREK NIMMO

Derek Nimmo, actor and comedian, died yesterday aged 66. He was born on September 19, 1932.

Derek Nimmo was famous for playing that staple character of suburban farce, the silly ass. He had been a shy and nervous child, and developed an array of odd twitches. But as an adult he was organised, effective, outgoing, shrewd and confident (winning awards, for instance, for after-dinner speaking). Clement Freud said he was "the grandest person I know".

Tall, with a big thatch of dark hair and a distinctive plummy voice, Nimmo was a natural and contented comic. His bumbling, stuttering character first reached a wide audience in the television series *All Gas and Gaiters*, and turned up in innumerable later guises, often clerical.

He admitted that it was hardly work for a grown man, "pretending to be generals, ambassadors or bishops when your friends really are", but described laughter as "an awfully pleasant noise". And the work was lucrative. In Australia he was once paid £20,000 for a single day on the set of *Neighbours*, playing an eccentric lord.

For such a very British actor he was surprisingly popular overseas, and was very widely travelled, once visiting 16 countries in 20 days. He described himself as an "ambassador of mirth", and abroad the silly ass walked with kings and nabobs. Because of television, he found he was known wherever he went.

Derek Robert Nimmo was born in Liverpool and went to school in the Lake District and at Quarry Bank School (at the same time as the later co-founder of the SDP, Bill Rodgers, and some years before it was made famous by John Lennon). He used to cycle to school on a sit-up-and-beg bike, with his toes turned out, looking like the young curate he was so often to impersonate. Already happy to make an exhibition of himself, he played several female parts in school plays, before reaching the zenith of his serious acting career as Brutus in *Julius Caesar*.

Leaving school he briefly followed his father into insurance before doing National Service in Cyprus. After spending 14 days in a monastery he thought about the priesthood, but instead found himself working as a paint salesman. But he wanted to paint the town with rather more flourish, and graduated from amateur dramatics to his first professional stage job at the Hippodrome, Bolton, in 1952, earning £4 a week.

He also worked as a promoter, impresario and, later, director. He organised dances in Penny Lane and Sunday concerts in the days when rock was still paired with roll. Acting as his own billboard, he once walked around Newport wearing an alligator head bearing the legend "See you later, alligator".

After four years in rep, he took the leap to London, living in a caravan, which he found one morning he had parked on a roundabout. For a time he worked for Lew Grade, then a theatrical agent, and was road manager for the singer Al Martino. In his early years in London he showed a touch of eccentricity by living with his family in a caravan. His other assignments at the time included stooging for the ventriloquist Peter Brough and the comedian Arthur Haynes.

He made his London stage debut in 1957 when he took over the part of Gaston in *The Waltz of the Toreadors*. It was followed by other plays including *The Amorous Prawn*, *The Irregular Verb to Love* and Philip King's farce *See How They Run* (in which he played one of the many clergymen).

All Gas and Gaiters, which began in 1966, was one of the first situation comedies with an ecclesiastical setting, and Nimmo's bashful curate blended perfectly with a cast that also included William Mervyn as the bishop and Robertson Hare as the archdeacon.


Derek Nimmo trying on a tie over his dog collar at the time of the series *Oh Father!* in 1973

Other series followed in similar vein, notably *Oh Brother!*, in which Nimmo played a monk, and *Oh Father!* The series *Life Begins at Forty* (1978), about a middle-aged couple discovering they are about to become parents, also drew large audiences.

Nimmo played Bertie Wooster in *The World of Wooster* in 1965, and at the time, that kind of light, untaxing and rather undernourishing comedy appeared to be his natural level. He was a natural comic, never the slave of his script. One of his specialities was taking off his socks and wiggling his rather prehensile toes, with which he once upstaged Bob Hope, and which led to the only known acting review in the *British Medical Journal*.

In his thirties Nimmo had five years in the West End musical *Charlie Girl*, but he later felt that this had been a waste of his best years. He was also a founding director of the Theatre of Comedy company, which presented popular farces in the West End.

But it was with his company Intercontinental Entertainment that he took comedy shows to dozens of foreign countries, particularly in the Far East, spending half the year abroad from the 1970s. "When actors get a contract from me," he said, "they have to buy a map." Occasionally, the location affected the choice of play. In Papua New Guinea, he said, he cancelled *There's a Girl in My Soup*, "because I thought it might give them ideas".

Working in Hong Kong, he became a keen sailor — in a friend's 45ft ketch — in the China Sea. On his travels he also collected antiques and porcelain to bring back to the elegant house in Kensington which he and his wife bought bit by bit over several decades.

For many years he could be heard as a panellist on Radio 4's *Just a Minute*, rabbiting his way through 60 unhesitating seconds. His ability to drawl out words with a thoroughly unnatural intonation while thinking desperately of something to say was the envy of many politicians.

Nimmo's television chat show, which started as *If It's Saturday, It Must Be Nimmo* and was later called *Just a Nimmo*, ran for seven years during the 1970s. He also had supporting parts in several films, among them *The Millionairess*, *The Amorous Prawn*, *Casino Royale* and *One of Our Dinosaurs is Missing*. He was the Variety Club's Showbusiness Personality of the Year in 1970.

Immaculately turned out, punctual and good-mannered, Nimmo was affronted when the Bishop of Durham announced his doubts about the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection on the eve of Easter in 1985. Nimmo, who remained a convinced Christian, attacked him as "a heretic", and said that the bolt of lightning that struck York Minster showed that God had a sense of humour.

The following year he donned his own cleric garb once more to play a dithering dean trying to cope with a radical bishop in *Hell's Bells*. Once when filming another show in St Peter's Square, he was spotted cuddling a blonde by a nun who took offence and had him arrested by the Vatican police.

Though he never cooked, he was a dauntless gastronome, and while travelling he sampled specialities ranging from bat — "you drink its blood first, and then they grill it" — to "witchetty grubs", the delicious larvae of an Australian beetle, which have to consumed while still wriggling. In 1986 his arteries became clogged, and he had a heart bypass.

He published books about wine, cocktails and travel, and was a convivial and tie-wearing member of the Garrick, where he led the opposition to admitting women members. He supported several charities, including the conservation trust, Care.

A keen gardener who said "slugging is my favourite blood sport", he was proud to have won a prize for best window box in London. When the Royal Horticultural Society named a rose after him, he swapped stories with the similarly honoured Dulcie Gray. The notes on his rose said "prone to mildew though it boasts a fine stem"; hers was "not very good for bedding, but fine up against a wall".

He is survived by his wife, Pat — whom he met in an amateur production of *Hay Fever*, and married in 1955 — and by their daughter and two sons.

SIR ANTHONY NUTTING, Bt

Sir Anthony Nutting, Bt, PC, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, 1954-56, died on February 23 aged 79. He was born on January 11, 1920.

Apart from Eden himself, Anthony Nutting was the most prominent political casualty of the Suez crisis of 1956, resigning from the Government and from Parliament because he could not defend British policy, and was not prepared to lie to the House of Commons or the United Nations. Yet he remained loyally silent for more than ten years, declining to comment on the deportment of colleagues who had assented at the collusion with France and Israel over the military assault on Egypt.

Nutting was Minister of State at the Foreign Office when President Nasser of Egypt nationalised the Suez Canal. It must have seemed to many in politics that there could be no one better qualified than he to carry out the policies of a Prime Minister whom he greatly respected and whose career paralleled his own in so many ways. Yet as the crisis developed through the late summer and autumn, he found himself appalled by Eden's determination to "topple Nasser" and make him "disgorge" the canal.

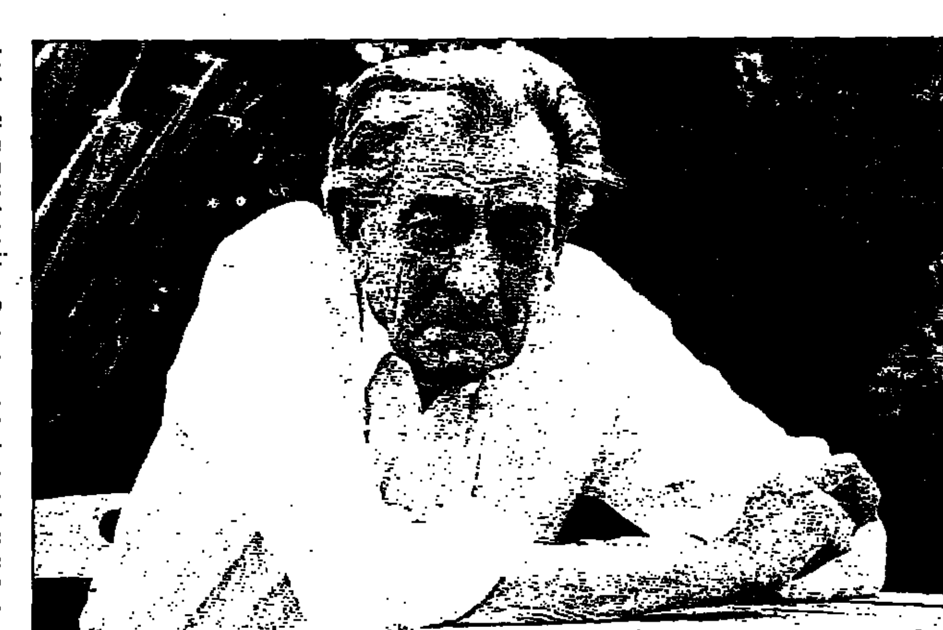
Eden pursued his plan with single-minded conviction, but to Nutting it seemed an act of lunacy, and as one of the few who were privy to the secret agreement with the Governments of Israel and France for an attack on Egypt, he objected to a "a disreputable manoeuvre" which would "debase our standards of international behaviour" and breach the UN Charter. To his horror he found that the man he had thought of as "Britain's 20th-century Talleyrand" was assuming the mantle of Napoleon, which predictably failed to fit. Nutting felt obliged to resign.

He later wrote of the feeling of being suddenly "bereft of friends, a castaway adrift on a sea of anger and recrimination, an object of distrust . . . torn between loyalty to principle and loyalty to friends and associates." He was 36, and the political career of one who many had expected to see eventually in Downing Street was at an end.

Harold Anthony Nutting was the youngest of three sons of Sir Harold Nutting, 2nd Baronet, of Quenby Hall, Leicester. He was educated at Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge, and at institutions of his own choice in Sofia and Munich. After a short period in the Leicester Yeomanry he was invalided out of the Army and joined the Foreign Service. He was in the Paris Embassy when France fell, and assisted in the evacuating of civilians. Then, in the Madrid Embassy from 1940 to 1944, he organised escape routes for Allied soldiers and airmen.

He contested Melton in Leicestershire at the 1945 election, holding it with a majority of more than 6,000. He was chairman of the Young Conservatives in 1946, vice-chairman of the National Union of Conservative and Unionist Associations 1947-50, and chairman 1950- 51. After the Conservative victory at the 1951 election he was appointed Parliamentary Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, and he was promoted to Minister of State and deputy to the Foreign Secretary, Selwyn Lloyd, in 1954. As such he led the British delegation to the UN General Assembly and Disarmament Commission in 1954 and 1955. He was a good internationalist, an early enthusiast for British membership of the EEC, and an effective debater, and was often described as the handsomest man in the House. All seemed set fair.

It was negotiation of the agreement by which British troops were withdrawn from Egypt that gave Nutting his first chance to conduct a major diplomatic operation. He and Nasser signed the agreement in Cairo on October 19, 1954. His enemies were later to suggest that he had been seduced by Nasser's charm and that this distorted his judgment at the time of Suez. It was not so. Though he quickly established easy personal relations with Nasser, he remained critical of him and his policies ("a conspirator, not a statesman"). But this experience undoubtedly gave him a clearer insight into the realities of power in the Middle East than those cherished by a Prime Minister who, because of his own background, equated Nasser with Hitler and the nationalisation of the Suez Canal Company with the occupation of the Rhineland.


Nutting in 1996, forty years after his resignation from the Government over Suez

The Suez story has been told by many, including both Eden and Nutting. Eden's account, *Full Circle*, appeared in 1960; Nutting's not until 1967. The reason for his long silence he explained in the preface to *No End of a Lesson*: "Either I had to tell the whole story as I saw it, or say nothing at all. And as long as any of the chief protagonists of the Suez War still held high office in Britain, it would clearly have been a grave disservice to the nation, which they still led and represented in the councils of the world, to have told the whole story."

But when it became known that Nutting was planning belatedly to publish his account, there was some uneasiness and some resentment. He was accused of breaking the Privy Counsellor's oath, and when advance extracts of the book appeared in *The Times*, giving for the first time confirmation from the British side of the Eden Government's collusion with France and Israel, there were strong demands on all sides for a debate in the Commons. But by 1967 Suez was old news, and by an ironic twist a much more dramatic explosion occurred in the Middle East just before the book's publication. The Six-Day War, with all its consequences, left nobody any time to bother about Suez.

The scrupulous concern for the reputation of others that led Nutting to delay publication for so long had earlier led him to refrain from the customary resignation speech in the Commons. He showed a draft of his intended statement to Harold Macmillan. "When he had finished reading it, he shook his head and, in solemn and almost funereal tones, he said, 'This is very damaging. It could easily bring down the Government, and for you, dear boy, it will do irreparable harm.' Then, after pausing for dramatic effect, he went on, 'Why say anything at all? You have already been proved right and we have been proved wrong. You have done the right thing by resigning and, if you keep silent now, you will be revered and rewarded. You will lead the party one day.'"

Whether it was necessary or wise for Nutting also to have resigned his Commons seat must be a matter for speculation. By then, however, his disgust at the way in which the disaster had been organised, the lies and what he saw as the false arguments urged in its justification had left him in no mood for any other course.

He made one unsuccessful attempt to re-enter Parliament, when he contested East Oldham at the 1966 election. But apart from that occasion he remained aloof from politics, and never showed any of the bitterness which he might have been expected to feel at so sudden and total a blasting of all his ambitions. Instead, he concentrated on writing. *I Saw for Myself*, based on reports, mainly on the Middle East, that he had contributed to American papers, appeared in 1958. Two years later he published *Europe Will Not Wait*, which argued that Britain was missing the "European bus".

As well as books on *The Arabs* (1964) and *The Scramble for Africa* (1970), he wrote a series of biographies: of T. E. Lawrence in 1961 — having acted as technical adviser for the film *Lawrence of Arabia* — Gordon (1966) and Nasser (1972). These were all workmanlike productions, written out of fascination with their subjects: he had no need to boil a pot. Later he became an enthusiastic and successful sheep farmer on his Sutherland estates.

He continued to travel widely, particularly in the Arab world, and did much to foster friendship with Arab countries. But he was far from being an uncritical partisan. He remained what he had always been, an internationalist and a patriot.

Nutting's two older brothers were killed in the war, and he succeeded his father as 3rd Baronet in 1972. He was first married to Gillian, but they divorced in 1959; he then married Anne in 1961, but she died in 1990, and the following year he was married, for a third time, to Margarita, who survives him, along with the daughter and two sons of his first marriage. His son John now succeeds to the baronetcy.

ON THIS DAY

February 25, 1920

In this article, the writer ends by saying that you could erect a statue to the labouring class but not one to the middle class, for it is inconceivable to put up a statue for something that is "nothing in particular".

'WHO ARE THE MIDDLE CLASSES?'

(FROM A CORRESPONDENT.)

"A man's a man for a' that," but the more or less civilized unit pigeonholes his species under definite designations, in spite of the fact that Western civilization has no exclusive caste.

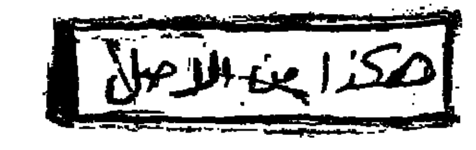
Our classes, using the phrase as it is understood by the man in the street, are drawn from one another, flowing and interflowing over the wheels of chance.

Be that as it may, we have in fact a threefold division into social aggregates. The gentry, the middle class, and the peasantry, and bewteen these, between the cultured gentleman, the half-cultured commoner, and the non-cultured labourer, stretch very significant gulfs. Conditions, as they are, necessitate this. In manners, in feelings, in morals, in dress, and in learning there is an incalculable disparity, not only of the more or less but in divergent tendencies. What passes with one class as virtue with the other is a delinquency. What may be to the one voluntary to the other is obligatory.

But the illusion we find holding the imagination of the public is that these differences are fundamental and stable, instead of superficial and transient; and that classes so divided are inimical to one another. And, peculiarly enough, the least homogeneous of these have been asking themselves where they begin and where end. In other words, "Who are the middle classes?" They are naturally enough at a loss to answer, and the reason for this is that the middle class, so named, is not a class at all, but a stage. It does not begin and end. It is composed of just the unfinished social entity, and is an intermediate aggregate, always moving from one state to another. No one aspires to be of the middle class! It is not an attainable height because it is no height, but the valley, as it were, between the beginning of man's endeavour, between the new-born god in the rough, looking over the waste of the earth that he is to be master of, and his finished descendant, a king of men.

Moreover, one is not born middle class, as one is born a peasant or a gentleman, because the middle class is not a status but a condition. The tradesman fails to be a gentleman, generally speaking, not because he sells sugar instead of taking rent from the poor, but if he has lacked the opportunity of finish he proceeds to ape the thing he knows that he is not, and therefore becomes a pinchbeck.

The labourer or peasant has no such pretensions. It is not a question of standard, but of real values. His thoughts are upon his labour as a living. He is, as it were, the raw material, not of any class, but of man with his infinite capacities and needs. His failure means death to all, his success prosperity to the world. He is not self-conscious and his brain acts directly, however slowly. He takes no account of public opinion, because public opinion can do nothing for him. If he puts on a bright kerchief to go a-wooing he does not assume it as a hallmark of his gentility. If he wears a black coat on Sundays he does so because it is the regalia of ceremony, never a sign of his respectability, but of his capacity for respect . . .



NEWS

Blair mounts assault on racism

Radical changes in the law to cut racism out of British public life were announced by the Government yesterday as the report on the Stephen Lawrence murder inquiry was published.

The Prime Minister promised the most far-reaching reform of race relations laws in 30 years and a drive to end the "canteen culture" in the police forces. Mr Blair also gave his personal backing to Sir Paul Condon, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner....................Pages 1-3, 13-17

Second avalanche hampers rescue

The race to rescue victims in the Austrian ski resort of Galtür was hampered when a second avalanche bore down on a neighbouring Tyrolean village. Yesterday's avalanche crashed through Mathon, about a mile from Galtür, where 16 bodies have been recovered after Tuesday's avalanche........Pages 1, 5

Derek Nimmo dies

The comedy actor Derek Nimmo, a veteran of Radio 4 shows such as *Just a Minute*, died yesterday aged 68..........................Page 1

Third World beckons

A crisis in job satisfaction and Britain's "workaholic" culture are behind the rapidly increasing number of people volunteering to work in the Third World, a new survey suggests...................Page 6

Passengers protest

Five regular train users will today lead a protest over railway standards at the first public railway summit. The passengers will address a London conference called by John Prescott...............Page 8

Nazi terrors revealed

An elderly Jewish man has told the Old Bailey how he and his family hid in a narrow pit and decided to commit suicide rather than be rounded up by the Nazis, who had already massacred 2,900 people.....................Page 9

Marriage split

Sir Evelyn de Rothschild and his wife of 25 years are to separate. Sir Evelyn married the American-born Victoria Schott in New York in 1973..............Page 9

Gay drama attacked

Queer As Folk, a new television drama with graphic underage homosexual sex scenes, has been condemned by viewers' organisations and gay groups........Page 11

George faces critics

Eddie George, the Governor of the Bank of England, was confronted by protestors in Tyneside after refusing to apologise for saying that job losses in the region were worth paying to curb inflation in the south...............Page 12

Kosovo talks end

Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, said that the 17 days of talks on Kosovo without an agreement "has not ended in a fudge, because it has not ended"...Page 18

Clinton 'rape' aired

Americans were finally given the chance to see and hear the woman who has accused President Clinton of raping her more than 20 years ago......................Page 19

Spain short of bulls

A ban on fighting bulls infected with BSE being exported from Portugal has left Spain's *toreros* short of quality animals to kill this season.........................Page 19

Israeli retreat urged

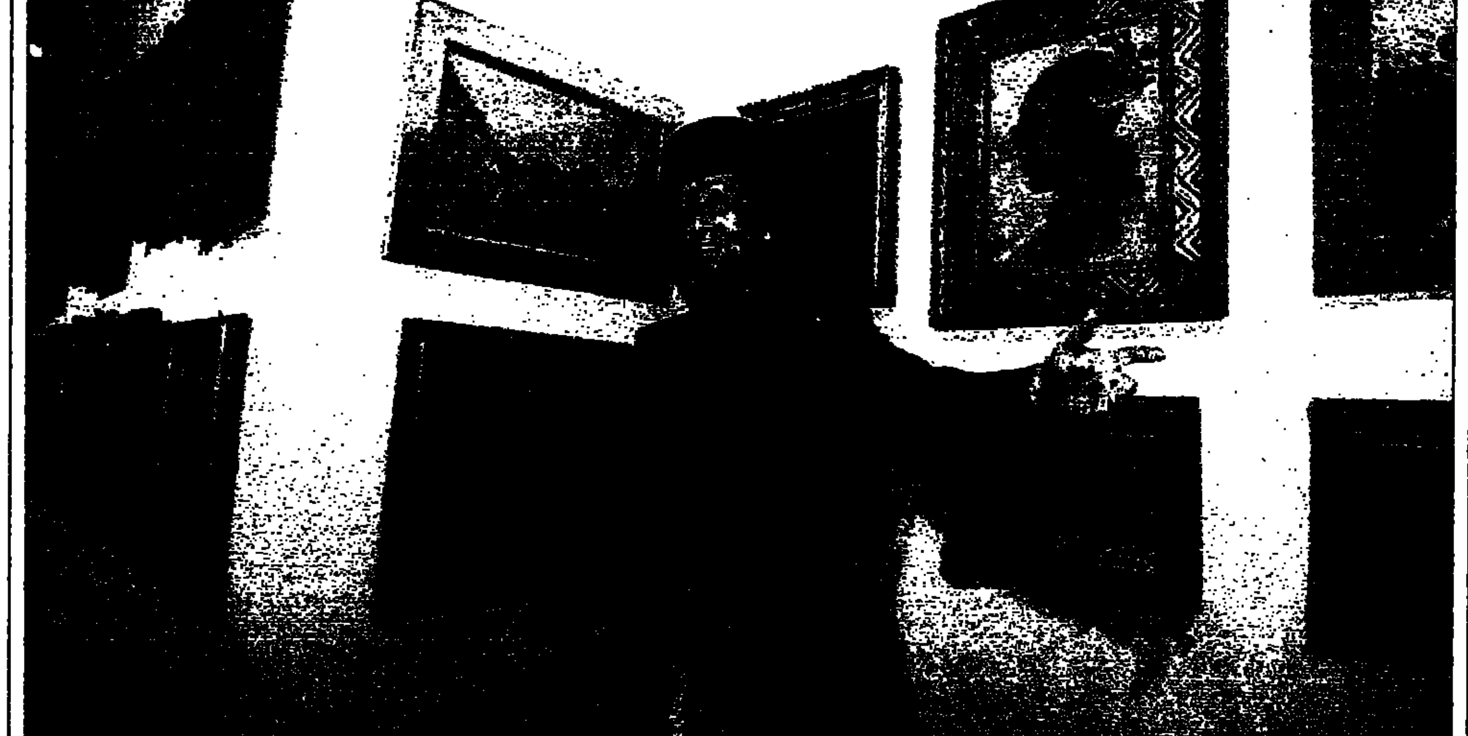
Calls for Israel to pull out from occupied south Lebanon have reached a crescendo following this week's killing of three elite paratroop officers............Page 20

Nigerians go to polls

Next weekend 40 million voters will go to the polls and attempt to end the military rule which has controlled Nigeria for all but ten years of more than three decades since independence.............Page 21

Houdini cannot escape film festival

The escapologist Harry Houdini's one attempt to break into films has been discovered. *The Man From Beyond*, a 70-minute silent feature telling the story of a man who comes back to life after being frozen for 100 years, was made in 1922 but soon disappeared. A copy of the acetate film has been restored and will be shown at the Bradford Film Festival in March........Page 11



RICHARD POHLE

Princess Alexandra visits the Olympia Spring Fair in London, where more than 200 paintings by Augustus John are on show until Sunday

FTSE soars: The London stock market soared to record highs as the Government's euro plans and a stream of strong company results pushed the FTSE 100 index to its highest closing level...........Page 29

M&S directors: Marks & Spencer is getting rid of three directors, including the great-grandson of its founder Michael Marks, and 28 senior executives...............Page 29

Egg success: Prudential Corporation has shelved plans to take over a bank or building society because of the success of Egg, its new telephone savings account......Page 29

Markets: The FTSE 100 index rose 152.4 points to 6307.6. The pound fell 1.24 cents to $1.5987 and 0.35p against the euro to 68.51p. The sterling index fell to 101.0........Page 32

Football: Plans for a biennial World Cup have been put on the back burner as Sepp Blatter, the president of Fifa, backed down on his proposals......................Page 56

Tennis: Former Wimbledon champion Boris Becker has been forced to withdraw from the Guardian Direct Cup at Battersea Park. The German, suffering from a viral infection, was replaced by compatriot Rainer Schuttler..........Page 53

Rallying: Richard Burns, the British driver, is hoping to repeat the success he recorded last year in the gruelling Safari Rally which begins today....................................Page 50

Football: John Toshack has been installed for a second reign at Real Madrid after the Spanish club dismissed Guus Hiddink.......Page 52

Defiant Oprah: Oprah Winfrey may have been disappointed by the reception Americans gave her new film *Beloved*, but she is still proud that she brought Toni Morrison's novel to the screen............Page 38

New films: Terrence Malick's *The Thin Red Line* is a movie that may change for ever the way war movies are viewed; *You've Got Mail* reunites the dream team of Meg Ryan and Tom Hanks.......Page 39

Dancing visitors: Pacific Northwest Ballet presents a programme of American choreography at Sadler's Wells, but most of it disappoints.......................................Page 40

Difficult drama: Birmingham Rep stages Fay Weldon's satirical play, *The Four Alice Bakers*, which proves to be problematic...Page 41

Cold call: "I grew up on Cape Cod. Something about the ocean, the water's edge, is arctic in feel. Sea and sky and endless merging: I love the ice and snow and cold." Andrea Barrett talks about her novel of polar exploration............. Page 22

Dr Thomas Stuttaford: The benefits of HRT; drugs that cause men to grow breasts; outbreaks of brain disease in goats; rest is no cure for a bad back...........................Page 23

Cyber-dip: A substitute for religion or a realm of violent fantasy? Sadie Plant dips into cyberculture. Plus, reviews by Jeremy Reed, Karen Armstrong...................Pages 42, 43

Private healthcare: Why the industry is undergoing an expensive and forced change..............Pages 44, 45

Best buys: Walking weekends in British beauty spots; three nights in Vienna for about £300; blue whale watching off Mexico......... Page 48

Almost every Nigerian, educated and illiterate, has agreed that the problem of Nigeria is that of leadership, not economic. One wonders why it has taken us so long to find a true leader for ourselves.

Post Express, Nigeria

TOMORROW

IN THE TIMES

■ **MEDIA**
"We don't want more tears." Trevor McDonald prepares for the last *News at Ten*

■ **EDUCATION**
How exam pressure can lead children as young as seven to revolt against the process and perform badly

Preview: *Ramsay's Boiling Point* (Channel 4, 9pm) follows the top London chef in his quest for a third Michelin star. **Review:** Thigh-high, leopard skin boots with five-inch stiletto heels . . . for men? Joe Joseph's not convinced..............Pages 54, 55

The Lawrence legacy

Emotion, however noble, must not be allowed to sweep every other consideration from its path. The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report makes 70 recommendations, many overdue, but not all wise...Page 25

Arts of Brussels

On Tuesday Tony Blair held out his "vision" of a European Union facing up to the "realities of global commerce". Today that vision comes up against another reality — the damage done to British commerce by ill-founded EU regulations..................................Page 25

Selective memory

The Foreign Office, savaged for its shoddy lines of communication with Britain's High Commissioner in Sierra Leone, now appears to have had all too close contact with the Commons Foreign Affairs Select Committee....................Page 25

ANATOLE KALETSKY

Mr Blair's ringing declaration for EMU could one day be remembered as the apogee of a political career which seemed to enjoy divine protection to that point......Page 24

MAGNUS LINKLATER

Those who live on the land are no longer to be encouraged to produce more. They are to become guardians of the countryside.......Page 24

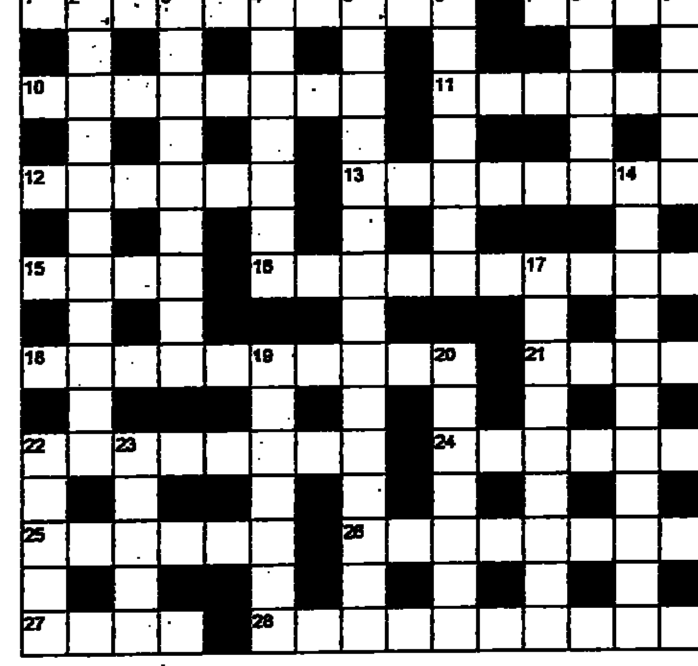
TIM HAMES

These are all reasons why the Home Secretary should not sack Sir Paul. They are also the reasons why the Metropolitan Police Commissioner should submit his resignation.....................................Page 24

Sir Anthony Nutting, Bt, PC, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs; **Clive Butler**, consulting surgeon to the London Hospital; **Richard Allen**, painter and teacher....Page 27

Blair's "change of gear" on euro; demolition of historic Oxford house; democratic freedoms in Zimbabwe; personalised car numberplates; BBC drama.............Page 25

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 21,036



ACROSS

1 Weak man, penniless, runs to uncle (10).
7 Card game turned into habit (4).
10 Display, for example, a musical box (8).
11 Gypsy's fiddle (6).
12 Double rm.? (6).
13 Deck soldiers used to call no trumps (8).
15 Old character sounding like Wackford Squeers (4).
16 Unmanageable ringleader in works is behind the engineers (10).
18 Editorials with informed guidance (10).
21 English-style college (4).
22 Dental filling breaking off (8).
24 Singer ordered to stop performing work (6).
25 Makin' a mess of spongy cake (6).
26 In which the members of a school are clearly on display (8).
27 Divine measure in which Gray's elegy was written (4).
28 Cast down, then raised anew (10).

DOWN

2 Diamond-shaped tablet is a success (11).
3 Paper is picked up here in the street (4-5).
4 Clergyman protecting a source of power (7).
5 Don't go to pot – stay on the straight and narrow (4,3,3,5).
6 Do a turn badly in the circular hall (7).
8 Cause resentment, missing opening of low-down joint (5).
9 Split right in the middle of chest (5).
14 Reading between the lines, it's relatively small (6,5).
17 Rearrest university crook who's in charge of funds? (9).
19 Sat on throne, but came down to speak (7).
20 Alter the sequence for each non-speaking actor (7).
22 Taking part in Swiss ambassador's dance (5).
23 Tender proposal (5).

Times Two Crossword, page 56

Solution to Puzzle No 21,035

AIRING OFFWHITE
D A U G U A X S
DECIDUOUS TWIST
I O G I E C O E
CANTEEN ENHANCE
T T G W M
DEVILSADVOCATE
P U N O E R M D
LORDSANDLADIES
I U I R A
MAJORCA VERDICT
S O G C E E C T
OLIVE TERMINATE
L N N E Y G N N
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Bristol 5.43 pm to 7.03 am
Edinburgh 5.38 pm to 7.13 am
Manchester 5.38 pm to 7.05 am
Penzance 5.57 pm to 7.13 am



NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT RECYCLING

Recycled paper made up 46.03% of the raw material for UK newspapers in 1997



FREE BOOKS FOR SCHOOLS

This week you get double tokens in *The Times*. For your second token, see page 30.

THE TIMES — FREE BOOKS TOKEN — WALKERS

☐ **General:** mild. England and Wales cloudy, breezy with drizzle in N and W; bright at times in S and E Eng. Scotland, N Ireland windy, cloudy with patchy drizzle in morning. Steadier, heavier rain in NW later. Tonight breezy, cloudy, some rain and drizzle, particularly in north.

☐ **Ldn, SE, Cent S, E Eng, E Ang, E Mids, Chl Is:** cloudy, a few sunny breaks, mainly dry. Mod SW wind. Max 9C (48F).

☐ **W Mids, N Wales, NW, Cent N Eng, Lakes, IoM:** cloudy, drizzle, steadier rain in evening. Fresh SW wind. Max 11C (52F).

☐ **SW Eng, S Wales:** cloudy, a little drizzle. Mod/fresh SW wind. Max 10C (50F).

☐ **NE Eng:** drizzle, then brighter, rain later. Fresh, gusty SW wind. Max 9C (48F).

☐ **Brdrs, E'burgh & D'dee, A'deen, Moray Firth:** cloudy, patchy rain in morning. Then drier, brighter; more rain this evening. Fresh SW wind. Max 10C (50F).

☐ **SW, NE, NW Scotland, Glasgow, Cent Highlands, Argyll, Orkney, Shetland:** cloudy, rain at times, heavier later. Fresh/strong SW wind. Max 10C (50F).

☐ **N Ireland:** cloudy with rain. Fresh SW wind. Max 12C (54F)

☐ **Rep of Ireld:** mainly dry at first; rain later. Mod/fresh SW wind Max 11C (52F)

☐ **Outlook:** mild in S tomor; colder in N; showers turning wintry in Scotland. Colder on Sat; wintry showers on N hills.

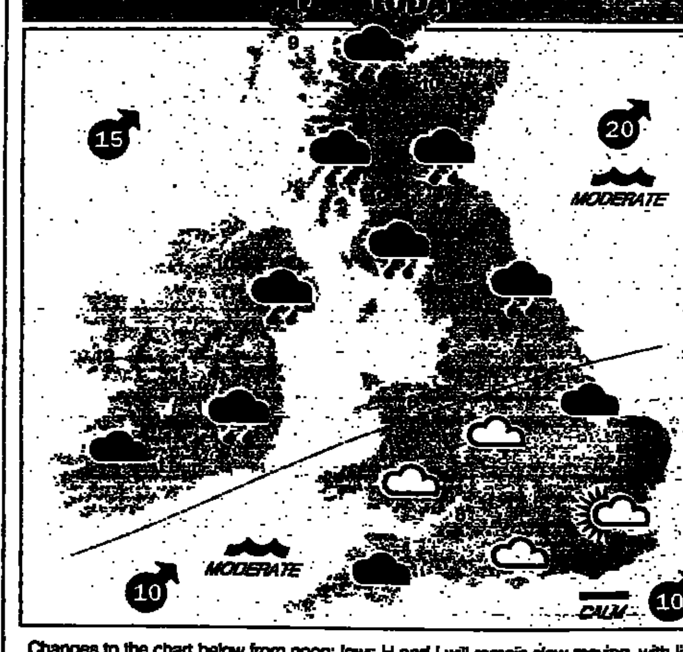
24 hrs to 5 pm: b=bright; c=cloud; d=drizzle; ds=dust storm; du=dull; f=fair; fg=fog; g=gales; h=hail; r=rain; sh=shower; sl=sleet; s=sun; t=thunder

	Sun hrs	Rain in	Max C	F	
Aberdeen	4.5	0.01	5	41	b
Anglesey	9.3	0.24	7	45	s
Aspatria	7.0	0.05	7	45	s
Aviemore	3.5	-	3	37	s
Belfast	6.8	0.18	7	45	s
Birmingham	0.8	0.19	5	41	d
Bognor R	-	0.12	7	45	r
Bournemth	-	0.23	8	46	c
Bristol	-	0.22	7	45	du
Buxton	0.3	0.09	3	37	b
Cardiff	0.3	0.03	7	45	d
Clacton	3.9	0.03	5	41	s
Cleethorpes	6.7	-	7	45	s
Colwyn Bay	0.5	0.15	7	45	c
Cromer	7.7	0.01	6	43	s
Eastbourne	0.7	0.08	7	45	c
Edinburgh	8.0	-	8	46	s
Eskdalemuir	7.6	0.06	6	43	s
Fishguard	7.1	0.09	9	48	s
Folkestone	1.8	0.05	6	43	b
Glasgow	7.3	0.03	7	45	s
Guernsey	3.4	-	14	57	b
Hastings	1.1	0.04	7	45	c
Hayling I.	-	0.17	7	45	du
Herne Bay	1.7	0.02	7	45	b
Hove	0.1	0.03	7	45	c
Hunstanton	7.9	-	6	43	s
Isle of Man	6.4	0.73	7	45	b
Isle of Wight	X	0.18	7	45	d
Jersey	3.1	0.51	13	55	c
Kinloss	5.7	-	5	41	b
Leeds	4.2	0.01	7	45	b
Lerwick	3.4	0.01	3	37	b
Leuchars	2.9	-	6	43	c
Littlehampton	0.2	0.18	7	45	du
London	0.2	0.03	7	45	c
Lowestoft	7.9	0.01	6	43	s
Manchester	5.1	0.06	7	45	s
Morecambe	5.7	0.10	7	45	s
Newcastle	3.4	-	7	45	s
Newquay	1.4	0.51	11	52	c
Norwich	6.6	0.02	7	45	s
Oxford	0.1	0.13	5	41	b
Penzance	2.2	0.40	12	54	sh
Poole	-	0.20	8	46	c
Prestatyn	0.3	0.16	7	45	c
Ross on Wye	-	0.24	5	41	c
Saunton Sands	2.6	0.37	9	48	s
Scarborough	8.4	0.01	6	43	s
Shrewsbury	1.3	0.26	6	43	du
Skegness	8.3	-	6	43	s
Southend	0.6	0.03	5	41	c
Southport	X	0.11	8	46	b
Southsea	-	0.06	8	46	r
Stornoway	4.1	-	6	43	s
Swanage	-	0.29	8	46	c
Teignmouth	-	0.13	9	48	du
Tenby	5.5	0.48	10	50	s
Tiree	2.9	0.10	7	45	b
Torquay	-	0.18	10	50	du

Yesterday: highest day max Guernsey, 14C (57F); lowest day max Tulloch Bridge, and Aviemore, Highland, 3C (37F); highest rainfall: Isle of Man, 0.73in; most sun: Anglesey, 9.3hr

	C	F	
Ajaccio	10	50	f
Akrotiri	17	63	s
Alex'dria	19	66	s
Algiers	18	64	f
Amsterdm	6	43	f
Athens	18	64	c
Bahrain	21	70	s
Bangkok	33	91	f
Barbados	29	84	f
Barcelona	17	63	s
Beijing	11	52	s
Beirut	16	61	s
Belgrade	5	41	f
Berlin	3	37	c
Bermuda	16	61	s
Biarritz	11	52	c
Bordeaux	9	48	c
Brussels	3	37	c
Budapest	3	37	c
B Aires	27	81	s
Cairo	19	66	s
Chicago	-2	28	f
Chrchurch	14	57	X
Cologne	3	37	c
C'phagn	1	34	c
Corfu	10	50	f
Dublin	4	39	r
Dubrovnik	8	46	c
Faro	17	63	s
Florence	11	52	s
Frankfurt	3	37	f
Funchal	17	63	c
Geneva	3	37	f
Gibraltar	19	66	s
Helsinki	-3	27	sn
Hong K	16	61	s
Innsbruck	1	34	c
Istanbul	14	57	f
Jeddah	29	84	f
Jo'burg	X		
L Palmas	21	70	f
Le Tquet	5	41	f
Lisbon	16	61	s
Locarno	5	41	s
L Angeles	21	70	s
Luxembg	0	32	sn
Luxor	4	39	c
Madrid	15	59	f
Majorca	13	55	f
Malaga	22	72	s
Malta	15	59	f
Melbourne	18	64	r
Mexico C	22	72	s
Miami	18	64	s
Milan	11	52	f
Montreal	-11	12	s
Moscow	-6	21	s
Munich	0	32	sn
Nairobi	28	82	f
Naples	10	50	f
N Delhi	21	70	f
N York	-4	25	f
Nice	13	55	s
Oslo	-3	27	f
Paris	7	45	f
Perth	35	95	s
Prague	0	32	sn
Reykjavik	0	32	sn
Rhodes	18	64	s
Rio de J	26	79	f
Riyadh	23	73	s
Rome	9	48	f
R'nldsway	6	43	f
Salzburg	0	32	sn
S Frisco	10	50	s
Santiago	30	86	s
S Paulo	X		
Seoul	9	48	c
Singapore	31	88	f
Stockholm	0	32	sn
Strasb'rg	3	37	c
Sydney	24	75	f
Tangier	17	63	c
Tel Aviv	17	63	s
Tenerife	20	68	f
Tokyo	12	54	s
Toronto	-5	23	s
Tunis	15	59	c
Valencia	19	66	s
Vanc'ver	6	43	f
Venice	12	54	s
Vienna	4	39	f
Warsaw	1	34	c
Wash'ton	-2	28	f
Wellngton	17	63	X
Zurich	1	34	c

Temperatures at midday local time, Tuesday. X = not available



Changes to the chart below from noon: lows H and I will remain slow-moving, with little change in pressure. High O will remain stationary



TODAY	AM	HT	PM	HT
Aberdeen	9:06	3.6	21:45	3.7
Avonmouth	1:52	10.4	14:42	10.5
Belfast	6:33	3.0	19:16	3.1
Cardiff	1:38	9.8	14:28	9.8
Devonport	0:30	4.5	13:17	4.4
Dover	6:13	5.6	19:03	5.6
Dublin	7:21	3.7	19:54	3.8
Falmouth	0:01	4.3	12:48	4.2
Greenock	7:18	3.0	20:16	2.9
Harwich	6:45	3.5	19:31	3.3
Holyhead	5:54	4.6	18:36	4.7
Hull (Albert D)	1:06	7.6	14:01	7.4
Ilfracombe	0:52	7.3	13:43	7.3
King's Lynn	1:27	5.2	14:14	5.2
Leith	10:12	4.6	22:54	4.7
Liverpool	6:33	7.7	19:15	7.8
London Bridge	8:54	6.3	21:42	6.2
Lowestoft	4:39	2.3	17:26	2.1
Margate	6:57	4.2	19:47	4.1
Milford Haven	1:16	5.4	14:02	5.5
Newquay	0:17	5.6	13:02	5.5
Oban	1:30	2.9	14:40	3.1
Penzance	-	-	12:24	4.6
Portland	1:18	1.4	14:04	1.3
Portsmouth	6:52	4.0	19:39	4.0
Shoreham	6:26	5.1	19:13	5.0
Southampton	6:22	4.0	19:12	4.0
Swansea	1:22	10.5	14:03	10.6
Tees	11:27	9.1	-	-
Walton-On-Naze	6:45	3.6	[illegible]	3.5

All times GMT. Heights in metres.



Total number of lives saved so far this year:	33
Total number of lifeboat launches so far this year:	171
Cost to RNLI per day:	£222,000
Cost to taxpayer:	£0
To make a donation, telephone:	0800 543210



Lifeboats
Royal National Lifeboat Institution
Reg. Charity No. 209603

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THE TIMES



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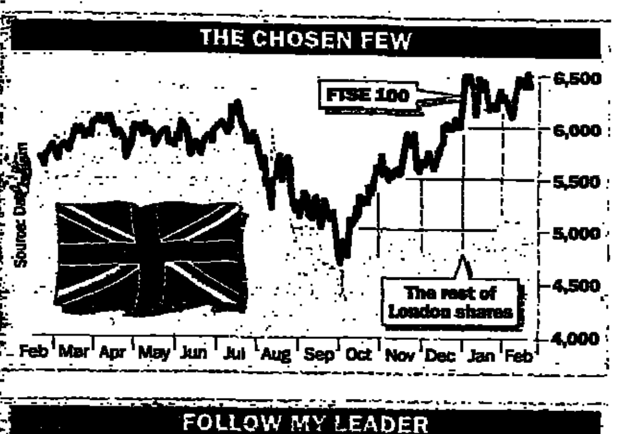
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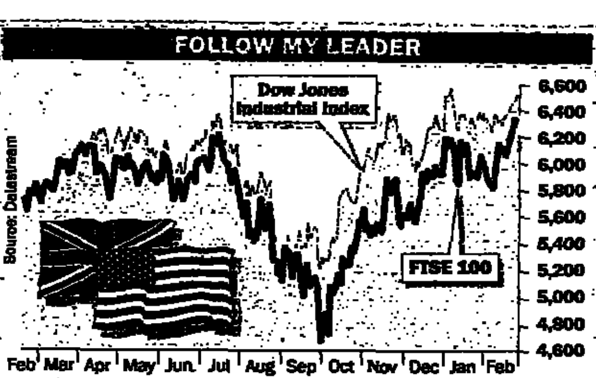
BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 25 1999

Sterling suffers as City gambles on government plans for EMU

FTSE reaches record heights





BY ALASDAIR MURRAY, ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

THE stock market surged to a record high while the pound slumped to a 16-month low against the dollar yesterday as traders gambled that the Government's plans to join the single currency would prompt further rate cuts.

The FTSE 100 index of leading shares closed up 152.4 points at 6,307.6 a new all-time closing high. Earlier, shares touched a new intra-day peak of 6,136.6.

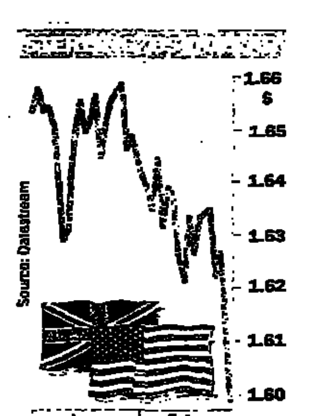
The market was also reassured by a string of strong corporate results and special dividends, while shares in companies such as Glaxo Wellcome, which have substantial exposure in the US, were boosted by the pound's decline against the dollar.

Wall Street enjoyed a solid opening after Alan Greenspan, Chairman of the Federal Reserve, said little in his second day of Humphrey-Hawkins testimony before the US Congress to ruffle the markets. Dr Greenspan repeated his view that the US economy is "going flat out" but predicted that consumption and investment growth are set to slow, easing fears that the Fed may be forced to raise interest rates to curb inflationary pressures.

Dr Greenspan added that he had no problem if any country wished to "unilaterally" adopt the US dollar as its currency. However, he insisted that US monetary policy could be set for the US alone and that the Fed would oppose any plans to make the Fed "a lender of last resort outside the US". Earlier this year, Argentina floated a plan to adopt the dollar as its currency to help prevent a repeat of the financial crisis that has swamped neighbouring Brazil in the past few months.

In New York the Dow Jones had climbed 30 points by lunchtime. European shares also recorded modest gains.

The dollar continued its recent ascent to touch a fresh record high of $1.0927 against the euro, before the euro made a partial recovery. Anti-euro sentiment in the markets was heightened by a a statement from Allianz, the German insurer, which is threatening to transfer much of its business abroad if the German Government proceeds with costly tax reforms.



The pound, however, suffered an even more dramatic fall, tumbling more than 1 per cent against the dollar to fall below $1.60 for the first time since September 1997. The pound closed down more than one cent at $1.5978 and lost ground against the euro falling from 68.16p to 68.51p.

Traders said that Tony Blair's National Changeover Plan, announced on Tuesday, had been far more pro-EMU than anticipated and that the market was now looking to move the pound towards its expected EMU entry level. As a result, the market's are anticipating that sterling will lose ground both against the euro, and against the all-conquering dollar.

Earlier in the day, Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, attempted to ease market fears over the extent of the economic slowdown, insisting that the odds remain against a technical recession in the first half of this year. He added that the economy is likely to return trend or even above trend growth later this year.

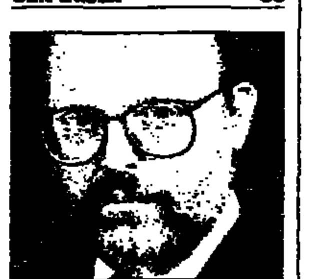
Mr George, who was making his first visit to the North East since sparking outrage by apparently suggesting that unemployment in the North was a "price worth paying" for low inflation, also rejected claims that the Bank of England does not care about unemployment.

"We are not in the business of sacrificing jobs to bring inflation down, we are in the business of keeping inflation down to create jobs and higher living standards," he said.

In a speech given to businessmen at the Newcastle Civic Centre, the Governor added that high employment and low inflation "are more like love and marriage — you can't have one without the other, at least for very long."

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Graham Searjeant
on his fears for a puritan Budget
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STOCK MARKET INDICES

FTSE 100	6307.6	(+152.4)
Yield	2.53%	
FTSE All Share	2871.61	(+59.23)
Nikkei	14355.45	(-145.20)
New York:		
Dow Jones	9584.14	(+19.72)*
S&P Composite	1277.37	(+6.19)*

US RATE

Federal Funds	4[illegible]%*	(4[illegible]%)
Long bond	97[illegible]*	(97[illegible])
Yield	5.42%*	(5.43%)

LONDON MONEY

3-mth interbank	5[illegible]%	(5[illegible]%)
Liffe long gilt future (Mar)	117.67	(117.86)

STERLING

New York:		
$	1.5983*	(1.6138)
London:		
$	1.5988	(1.6113)
€	1.4596	(1.4674)
SFr	2.3241	(2.3391)
Yen	194.86	(195.28)
£ Index	101.0	(101.6)

DOLLAR

London:		
€	1.0974*	(1.1009)
SFr	1.4520*	(1.4475)
Yen	121.93*	(120.83)
$ index	108.5	(108.1)

Tokyo close Yen 121.38

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent 15-day (May)	$11.10	($11.10)

GOLD

London close	$287.65	($287.45)

* denotes midday trading prices

Exchange rates .... Page 30

M&S axes 31 top jobs as new chief starts HQ cull

BY SARAH CUNNINGHAM, RETAIL CORRESPONDENT

THREE directors of Marks & Spencer are to leave the troubled retailer, including the great-grandson of the company's founder.

A further 28 senior executives are also to go in the first wave of redundancies to hit its Baker Street head office in London since 1991. The jobs of hundreds of less senior staff are expected to go in the next few weeks.

The head office staff of 4,000 have anxiously-awaited details of a threatened shake-up since the company issued a profits warning earlier this year after a disastrous winter season.

The cull is the first move by Peter Salsbury, who succeeded Sir Richard Greenbury as chief executive late last year after a bitter boardroom battle. Chris Littmoden, one of the directors who is leaving the company, was a rival contender for the chief executive's job.

The scale of the cuts was unexpected and has led to fears that 400 or more jobs could go further down the ranks. M&S said more redundancies were possible, but refused to say how many. The company says it is committed to staying in its central London headquarters.

M&S is setting aside £10 million to cover payoffs to the 31 executives who have lost their jobs so far. This sum will also cover compensation paid to Keith Oates, the former deputy chairman who agreed to take early retirement after a failed bid to lead the company. Mr Oates is thought to have received up to £2 million, although full details of his payoff will only be released in the annual report in late June.

The three directors who are to take early retirement are Derek Hayes, 50, who has been in charge of European operations; Mr Littmoden, 55, who has been running the American business; and John Sacher, 57, in charge of information technology and logistics. Under the company's early retirement scheme, they could receive the whole of their salaries up until the official retirement age of 60.

Mr Sacher, who is a great-grandson of Michael Marks, is the last member of the founding family to be an executive director. David Seiff, another descendant of the founder, remains on the board as a non-executive director. The board will still have 16 members, with nine executive and seven non-executive directors.

The departure of Mr Littmoden has heightened speculation that M&S will sell its US businesses, Brooks Brothers and Kings Super Markets, although the company insisted that no moves were imminent. It is still possible that M&S will open branches of Brooks Brothers, which specialises in preppy menswear, in Europe.

Sir Richard Greenbury, who remains as non-executive chairman but was replaced by Peter Salsbury as chief executive after a boardroom rumpus late last year, said: "I restructured the management when I took over in 1991 and the company then enjoyed seven years of strong growth. The changes announced today by our new chief executive not only respond to a rapidly changing environment, but will enable us to be better focused and thus move strongly forward again."

M&S shares closed up 19¾p at 401¾p.

Commentary, page 31

Pru acquisition plan shelved

MARIANNE CURPHEY, INSURANCE CORRESPONDENT

PRUDENTIAL Corporation has shelved plans to take over a bank or building society because of the success of Egg, its new telephone savings account.

Sir Peter Davis, chief executive of Prudential, said yesterday that Egg had collected deposits of £3 billion in its first five months, well above its initial target of £5 billion over five years. Egg now has 250,000 customers, compared with the 100,000 it had originally aimed to attract.

Egg was launched in October as a low-cost operation for customers who are happy to apply by telephone or through the Internet. It guarantees to pay 0.5 per cent above the bank base rate.

Egg and Prudential Banking, the company's other deposit account, cost £77 million last year, is expected to cost a further £100 million this financial year, but could make a small profit by 2001.

Prudential unveiled a 3 per cent rise in operating profit from continuing operations to £860 million for 1998 and confirmed that it was "seriously considering" a listing in the United States. Listing as "Jackson National Life" — the name of Prudential's US businesses — was "one of the options".

Profit before tax, including actual investment returns, fell to £1.14 billion (£1.17 billion) despite a £249 million exceptional profit on the disposal of the group's businesses in New Zealand and Australia. The total dividend increased by 10 per cent to 21p per share.

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Bloodbath in Baker Street: directors Derek Hayes, left, Chris Littmoden, centre, and John Sacher were the most senior casualties at M&S's headquarters

New issue fee rules in reform package

BY PAUL DURMAN

THE long-running investigation into the City fees charged for underwriting new share issues has ended with a package of only minor reforms.

Stephen Byers, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, lent his backing to a report by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission that found some companies had to pay higher fees because of the "complex monopoly" that existed among City banks and brokers.

In future, investment banks will have to tell companies of alternatives to the traditional system of underwriting which involves standard fees totalling 2 per cent of the amount of money raised.

If companies fail to take advantage of alternatives, such as putting sub-underwriting out to tender, the London Stock Exchange will require them to explain why to their shareholders.

Mr Byers also backed the MMC's recommendation that the Bank of England should publish guidance to encourage the use of tendering and the pricing of share issues at a deep discount to the prevailing market price. However, the Treasury is resisting changes to capital gains tax to remove an obstacle to deep discounting.

Game on as EB eyes up its rival

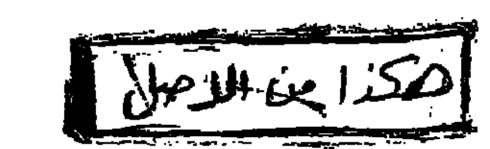
BY CHRIS AYRES

THE computer games industry prepared itself for some real-life action yesterday when Electronics Boutique, the specialist video and computer games retailer, admitted that it was considering swallowing up Game, its arch-rival.

The deal will put a value of at least £76 million on Game, leaving Neil Taylor, its chief executive, sitting on a stake worth at least £16.6 million. However, industry sources said yesterday's bid could spark an auction for Game, which has 83 stores, with the electrical retailer Dixons likely to enter the fray through its new @Jakarta software and games subsidiary.

The bid approach comes after a tough few months for Game, which recently issued a profits warning.

It is understood that Game was forced to issue yesterday's announcement after its shares rose 27 per cent to 130½p. Electronics Boutique — which has a market value of £228 million — also put out a statement, saying the deal would go ahead only if it was in shareholders' best interests. Both companies emphasised that talks were in "very preliminary stages".



Investors snub on-target AMP

By Paul Armstrong

AMP, the recently listed Australian financial services company, endured the realities of stock market life yesterday when its shares were marked down 3.6 per cent even though its profits met market forecasts.

AMP unveiled a A$1.03 billion (£396 million) net operating profit for 1998, comfortably above the forecast range of A$774 million to A$977 million in its April prospectus and in line with analysts' expectations.

However, investors cut its share price by 71 cents to A$19.19 on the Australian share market. Dealers attributed this to gains in the shares in the past week and late hopes that the company would exceed forecasts.

AMP's bottom line was cut to a A$646 million loss after it booked a widely expected A$1.57 billion extraordinary charge relating to costs of last year's demutualisation and flotation. An 18 cent dividend was declared for the year.

AMP derives about half its earnings from UK interests, including Henderson, the fund manager, and Pearl Assurance. It has also agreed to the £2.7 billion purchase of NPI.

EXCHANGE RATES

	Bank Buys	Bank Sells
Australia $	2.62	2.45
Austria Sch	21.05	19.39
Belgium Fr	61.98	57.02
Canada $	2.515	2.327
Cyprus Cyp £	0.8832	0.8167
Denmark Kr	11.43	10.54
Egypt	5.66	5.05
Finland Mkk	9.22	8.47
France Fr	10.03	9.25
Germany Dm	3.013	2.771
Greece Dr	496	457
Hong Kong $	13.21	12.01
Iceland	128	108
Indonesia	17703	12703
Ireland Pt	1.2022	1.1132
Israel Shk	6.84	6.18
Italy Lira	2997	2760
Japan Yen	209.52	191.99
Malta	0.665	0.606
Netherlds Gld	3.402	3.107
New Zealand $	3.14	2.91
Norway Kr	13.22	12.28
Portugal Esc	304.73	282.70
S Africa Rd	10.53	9.57
Spain Pta	253.98	235.19
Sweden Kr	13.82	12.72
Switzerland Fr	2.475	2.257
Turkey Lira	585953	547006
USA $	1.704	1.561

Rates for small denomination banknotes only as supplied by Barclays Bank. Different rates apply to traveller's cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday



Rana Talwar, the Standard Chartered chief executive, said he expected another challenging year of "continuing uncertainty"

Debt provisions triple at Standard Chartered

By Caroline Merrell, Banking Correspondent

STANDARD Chartered, the international banking group, yesterday revealed a sharp fall in profits, as its bad debt provisions nearly tripled, to £436 million, because of the economic turmoil in the Far East.

Profits slid by 22 per cent to £703 million from £870 million in 1997. The provisions included £386 million in the Asia-Pacific region, and a further general provision of £50 million.

Rana Talwar, the new group chief executive, said he expected this year to be equally tough for the bank. He said: "This year will be another challenging year for Standard Chartered, as the economic environment in our major markets is unlikely to improve dramatically.

"There will be continuing uncertainty and I do not expect significant growth to resume this year," he added.

In Malaysia, for example, the bank revealed that it had nonperforming loans of £185 million and had made provisions of £64 million. In Thailand and Indonesia, nonperforming loans totalled £208 million, while nonperforming loans in Singapore reached £197 million.

In Hong Kong, where Standard Chartered generates the majority of its revenue, trading profit fell by 9 per cent to £257 million. Revenue rose by 6 per cent to reach £640 million, while non-performing loans reached £170 million.

In the UK, trading profit fell from £94 million to £55 million after Year 2000 costs of £76 million.

While admitting that the bank still faced problems in Asia, Mr Talwar laid out his future plans. He was keen to point out that Standard was willing to boost its core businesses through acquisition.

He admitted that the bank had held talks with BankAmerica about buying up its Far Eastern operations. He also confirmed the bank had looked at acquiring UBS's trade finance arm.

Mr Talwar has initiated two projects aimed at restoring growth. He said: "We will take a fresh look at the company with the aim of re-engineering and standardising all our activities. The project will focus on improving productivity and customer service. Second, we will upgrade our management information systems."

The total dividend rises to 20¼p a share from 18.5p, with a final 14½p. The shares rose 22p to 832½p yesterday.

Profits at CGU cut back by weather

By Marianne Curphey, Insurance Correspondent

MASSIVE storm and flood claims have badly affected profits at CGU, the UK's largest composite insurer, but the group's full-year results were rescued by a record performance from the life insurance division.

CGU, formed from the merger last June of Commercial Union and General Accident, saw general insurance operating profit halve to £504 million (£1.04 billion).

Bob Scott, group chief executive, said the general insurance profit was affected by "adverse weather, large claims and competition in major markets" and had suffered from a £179 million increase in claims in 1998.

Ice storms in Canada and floods in the UK in April, October and December inflicted damage on group profits. Mr Scott said: "We are coming to the conclusion that there is a change in weather patterns. The sheer number of weather events is a real concern. If the number of claims we are going to pay for storms is set to go up, we are going to have to do something on premiums."

Mr Scott said he intended to focus on improving underwriting results and raising premium rates in 1999. Investment returns, which insurers use to offset underwriting losses, were likely to shrink in the future, he said.

Overall, pre-tax operating profit was £768 million before exceptional items (1997: £1.24 billion). Shareholders' funds rose by £1 billion to £9 billion and the total dividend per share rises to 35.15p a share, from 31.53p. The shares advanced 54½p to 983½p, although they remain adrift of a 12-month high of £12.80.

B&B's results seen as aid to mutuality

By Susan Emmett

THE Bradford & Bingley Building Society, which is fighting the pro-flotation lobby, yesterday asserted that mutuality works as it unveiled a 37 per cent rise in 1998 pre-tax profits to £128.5 million, plus the return of £110 million to members. The results will serve as ammunition as the B&B prepares to fight a conversion resolution from Stephen Major. The society's 2.5 million members will vote in April.

However, the B&B did not disclose how much of its profit came from Mortgage Express and Black Horse Agencies, its acquired businesses, which are not run as mutual operations. The B&B, which bought Black Horse from Lloyds TSB for £58 million last March, said the estate agency had performed ahead of expectations, but emphasised that most growth had come from the rest of the group.

Net residential mortgage lending grew by 71 per cent, to £1.2 billion, a market share of 4.6 per cent. Savings were up 23 per cent to £1.6 billion, pushing reserves past £1 billion, an increase of 8.7 per cent.

Margins widened to 1.31 per cent, from 1.22 per cent. The society attributed this to Mortgage Express, which has higher margins, but said there were no plans to cut the direct provider's margins in line with the society's.

GM selects Britain for R&D unit

By Christine Buckley

GENERAL MOTORS, the US car firm that owns Vauxhall, has chosen the UK rather than Germany for a new research and development operation.

The £5 million facility, to focus on van-making research and development of recreational four-wheel drive vehicles, will be based near Bedford and will employ 75 people. General Motors had previously said that all its European research would be based in Germany, where its main R&D operations are based.

Vauxhall said the UK was chosen for the centre because it would work closely with production of the Frontera. Nick Reilly, its chairman, said: "The new centre will make a significant contribution to the engineering of both current and future light commercial and recreational vehicles for sale in international markets."

The announcement comes days after Mr Reilly warned of the perils of investing in Britain if it stays outside the euro.

Commentary, page 31

Nissan and Daimler close to deal

By Robert Whymant

DAIMLERCHRYSLER is close to reaching an outline agreement with Nissan to buy an equity stake in the struggling Japanese carmaker.

The size of the stake is still being negotiated but could be as high as 33 per cent, with the US-German company taking management control. The companies hope to reach a final agreement by mid-March, locking out Ford and Renault.

DaimlerChrysler, whose interests range from Mercedes-Benz to Jeep, would acquire a 10 per cent stake in Nissan's core operations, at a cost of Y100 billion (£512 million), and Nissan's 39.8 per cent share in it affiliate Nissan Diesel.

Yesterday Nissan, Japan's second-largest carmaker, announced a new round of cost-cutting measures. The company, which lost about £165 million last year, has debts of £13.75 billion.

Today DaimlerChrysler is expected to post a 38 per cent surge in 1998 net income to about DM11 billion (£3.87 billion).

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Shield Diagnostics merger threatened

OPPOSITION from two Norwegian private shareholders is threatening the planned £170 million merger between Shield Diagnostics and Axis Biochemicals of Norway. David Evans, Shield's managing director, will meet the investors in Oslo tomorrow in an attempt to persuade them to back the deal. Both companies have developed tests to measure the risk of heart disease, addressing markets potentially worth many hundreds of millions of pounds.

The investors hold more than 10 per cent of Axis, possibly enough to scupper the all-share deal under Norwegian takeover rules. The sceptics are thought to include Tharald Brovig, a leading technology investor with a 7.7 per cent stake in Axis, who has a substantial following in Norway. The Norwegians are concerned that the Shield/Axis merger will be a re-run of Amersham International's merger with Nycomed. That much larger healthcare merger led to many Norwegian job losses.

Perrier sales up 24%

Perrier Vittel, Nestlé's mineral water subsidiary, reported 1998 sales of Ffr23.8 billion (£2.5 billion), up 24 per cent over 1997. The figure includes sales from San Pellegrino, acquired last year. Excluding San Pellegrino, full-year sales growth would have been 9 per cent. Almost one-third of sales was attributed to North America. Germany accounted for 25 per cent, Italy 19 per cent and France 17 per cent. Perrier Vittel distributes mineral water under 65 brand names, producing 11.5 billion litres and has a global market share of 15.8 per cent.

Airtours lifts holding

AIRTOURS, the UK travel group, has raised its holding in Germany's Frosch Touristik (FTI) to 35.92 per cent from 29.03 per cent. The shares were acquired from Dietmar Gunz, FTI managing director, and two private investors. Airtours bought a 29.03 per cent stake in FTI last May for an initial DM50 million (£17.7 million) with an option for a full takeover in 2002. FTI is Germany's fifth-largest tour operator. It has its own airline, Fly FTI, and owns the hotel group Siva Hotels and a travel agency chain, Flugboerse.

L'Oreal growth slows

L'OREAL, the French cosmetics and pharmaceutical group, saw a 13 per cent rise in pre-tax profits, to Fr8.78 billion (£924 million), in 1998 after sales rose 9.1 per cent, to Fr75.4 billion. Excluding exchange-rate effects, sales rose 11 per cent. The results represent a slowdown from the spectacular sales growth of recent years. L'Oreal, run by Welsh-born Lindsay Owen-Jones, has achieved hefty double-digit growth in revenues since 1994, driven by its cosmetics division, which last year rose by 9.6 per cent, against nearly 15 per cent in 1997.

Quantica downbeat

QUANTICA, the recruitment and training services group, saw its shares fall by 7p to 53p yesterday after dealers were disappointed by the company's view of its own prospects. The company, in which chairman Tony Gartland, the small company investor, has a 45 per cent stake, reported pre-tax profits of £2.4 million for the year to December 4 on a threefold rise in turnover to £15 million. Mr Gartland reported a downturn in its training business. The company's maiden dividend will be 2p.

Easynet in the black

EASYNET, the Internet service provider, yesterday reported a pre-tax profit of £143,000 for the year to December 31, compared with losses of £1.3 million the previous year. Sales more than doubled from £7.4 million to nearly £17 million, while losses per share of 6.43p turned into earnings of 0.55p. David Rowe, chairman, said the year ahead would see "strong growth, expansion and innovation". No dividend will be paid. Shares in the company rose nearly 15 per cent from 261p to 300p.

Liffe restructure plan

MEMBERS of Liffe, the London futures and options exchange, are today expected to back plans for a restructuring of the organisation that would ditch its members-only status in favour of a business that could ultimately be quoted on the Stock Exchange. The restructuring on more business-like lines is tied to the conversion of Liffe to an electronic trading system, which will see the eventual phasing out of the brightly-coloured jackets on the open outcry trading floor.

Online lift for Dixons

SHARES in Dixons rose 73p to a new high of £11.63 after the electrical retailer said its Freeserve Internet service provider was linking with Bertelsmann, the German publisher. Freeserve, which has won more than one million users since its launch last September, has signed a three-year deal to launch Bertelsmann's online service in Britain. The BOL service (www.BOL.com) will launch in Britain next month, following the introduction of country-specific services in Germany and France.

Toys chief sells stake

RICHARD KING, chairman and managing director of Character Group, the company which is responsible for marketing and distributing Buzz Lightyear toys and Spice Girl dolls raised more than £1.6 million yesterday from the sale of a 2.1 per cent stake in the company. He sold 450,000 shares at 358p. The shares yesterday fell 12p to 349½p against a high reached last summer of 426½p. After the disposal Mr King remains interested in 19.3 per cent of the company.

All change at Baker Street



COMMENTARY
by our City Editor

The boardroom at Baker Street has never experienced anything like this before. The cold-blooded axing of three executive directors has sent shock waves through Marks & Spencer and done wonders for Peter Salsbury's ruthlessness rating.

The directors' floor used to be a civilised spot, even allowing for the occasional irascibility of Sir Richard Greenbury. A Sieff and a Sacher still had seats on the board and, until recently, Lord Sieff, the former chairman, would regularly drop in to enjoy an M&S lunch, served in fine style by the butlers. Retailing at the end of the 20th century might be a cut-throat business spawning vicious competitors but this was M&S and it did things its own way.

Now those being given their cards include a member of the founding family, John Sacher. Perhaps, despite his long career in the firm, the new boss will be the agent for change that is so very necessary.

That 31 of the top 125 M&S jobs can be dispensed with in the initial de-layering indicates just how bureaucracy had been allowed to breed in Baker Street. Many more jobs will follow. But it seems that Mr Salsbury will have to work on changing the culture within the difficult confines imposed by the sprawling head office. Those who negotiated the deal that gave M&S a 125-year lease on the property did so with such skill that the company now inhabits the premises at little more than a peppercorn rent. The company simply cannot afford to move.

But there will be efforts to modernise the building. They could start with the flinging open of the many doors that line the upper corridors. After yesterday's blood-letting, the chances are that some executives will be found cowering behind them in the hope that they might not be noticed.

The problems within the group go far beyond an over-staffed head office. Out in the stores, the sales are looking depressing. February, says Mr Salsbury, is always the worst month for clothing sales but the anecdotal evidence is that M&S is finding the month rather nastier than some of its rivals. It does appear to be out of touch with its customers, a drastic predicament for what still likes to think of itself as the nation's favourite retailer.

Analysts have leapt upon the notion that Mr Salsbury is going to concentrate his efforts on sorting out the main British business, perhaps scaling back on overseas operations. Chris Littmoden's enforced retirement has encouraged stories that Brooks Brothers is to be sold. But apart from running the US operations, Mr Littmoden was also seen as Mr Salsbury's only serious rival for the top job. A really ruthless man might have allowed that consideration to influence his thinking.

Mr Salsbury is certainly not about to sell Brooks, although the American management would like to buy it.

A Bridgeman inquiry too far

It seems an age ago that John Bridgeman decided he would initiate a full-blooded investigation into underwriting charges. He had warned the banks that he would do just that if they did not drastically change their ways.

Now, after a long and complicated inquiry, the full might of the Monopolies Commission has been brought to bear on the subject and the City, and its arcane underwriting practices, have been given a virtually clean bill of health. The Securities and Futures Authority is to make sure that corporate financial advisers are made aware that they should not operate a cartel and should tell their clients that there are alternative ways of raising money to the traditional rights issue, but that is the most concrete proposal to come out of the proceedings.

Denise Kingsmill, the clever lawyer who led the inquiry, detected at first sight a complex monopoly. The regularity with which the same fee structure occurs would lead many to the same conclusion. But the City becomes ever more competitive and, even as the inquiry was wending its long winded way around the Square Mile and its customers, variations on the traditional rights issue theme have been introduced.

So now the MMC has come up with little more than an exhortation to play fair with the customers. Many of the customers are, of course, quite capable of ensuring that they negotiate a reasonable deal with their financiers. Shopping around is not merely the prerogative of those who can choose between M&S and Next: few corporate customers now feel wedded to the idea of relationship banking if they feel that a better deal can be offered elsewhere.

But they have not been over-enamoured of the book-building approach to cash raising so favoured by the American houses. It was these incomers who lobbied so hard for change, yet the MMC has not been persuaded to abandon the concept of pre-emption rights which is taken for granted in the UK. Quite right too, for ownership is not something to be snatched away lightly. That a company may dilute its investors' holdings by 5 per cent through share issues, has long been tolerated but to go any further would be dangerous.

This entire episode has been a fine example of unnecessary interference. Houses such as Schroders were already experimenting with new methods of fund raising before Mr Bridgeman decided on his heavy handed tactics. The market has prevailed.

Liaison receiving too much currency

While Eddie George spent yesterday trying to explain how low inflation and high employment are united in marriage, the talk in the currency markets was more about the pain of breaking-up. For many months, the dollar and the pound were happily entwined, maintaining the kind of stable relationship that would have Britain instantly qualifying for EMU membership if only sterling had chosen the mark rather than the greenback as a partner.

Tony Blair's National Changeover Plan, however, seems finally to have driven a wedge between the transatlantic lovers. The pound, already 4 per cent lower against the dollar this year, finally broke out of its tight band to close down below $1.60 for the first time in 16 months. Equally significantly, the pound failed to follow the dollar higher against the euro. While the dollar climbed to a fresh high against the fledgeling European currency, sterling actually closed lower and now sits some 1.5 per cent below its record euro level.

Even on the Government's most optimistic target, it is a minimum of four years before Britain could actually join the single currency. The currency markets, however, have already succumbed to the dangerously self-fulfilling prophecy of inevitability, just as Mr Blair and his fellow europhiles would have wished. The pound, it seems, is now destined to be viewed as the euro's, rather than dollar's, consort.

Motor mouth

LAST week Nick Reilly, Vauxhall chairman, gave warning of dire investment consequences if Britain stayed outside the euro. This week General Motors, Vauxhall's parent, announced a new investment in the UK — one made in preference to Germany. Surely credit cannot go to Tony Blair's euro push on Tuesday. Apparently Mr Reilly meant future generations of investment, whatever timescale that might encompass. He may consider if he should make more euro warnings rather than when.

Centrica to make special dividend payout of £530m

By Christine Buckley, Industrial Correspondent

CENTRICA, the company that trades as British Gas, the household energy supplier, yesterday ended the long wait of shareholders for a dividend when it announced plans for a £530 million special payout.

The company, formed when the old British Gas split into Centrica and BG two years ago, had not previously paid a dividend as it struggled to sort out its take-or-pay gas contracts. But it is to pay a special dividend of 12p a share followed by a first ordinary payment of 2½p.

The payment was declared as Centrica said it is now a bigger operator in the opened-up electricity supply business than at least one of the country's regional electricity companies. Having signed up one million homes, Centrica is now a bigger supplier than Swalec, the Welsh company that is half of the multi-utility Hyder.

Centrica, however, having recruited electricity customers through its multimillion-pound national advertising campaign, is short of electricity. It has to buy most of its supply in the electricity pool — the controversial marketplace which is being reformed — where it says electricity prices are 20 per cent higher than they need to be.

Roy Gardner, chief executive, confirmed that Centrica had pulled out of the race to buy power stations from PowerGen but said it could still try, with a partner, for Drax, National Power's £2 billion plant.

However, he said he did not have specific approval from the Department of Trade and Industry that the Government would not have regulatory concerns if Centrica were to clinch a deal. Centrica has 80 per cent of the domestic gas market despite competition having begun nearly three years ago.

Centrica did not deny recent reports that it is interested in buying the RAC, the motoring organisation. Mark Clare, finance director, said there would be big synergies in fusing the operations of such businesses because of their call centres and customer networks.

Mr Gardner said Centrica was keen to expand its home service operations. It aims to provide everything from plumbing, electrical appliance repair to automated home systems.

Pre-tax profits before exceptionals for the year to December 31 were £208 million (£175 million).

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ANDRE CAMARA



John Sunderland, left, chief executive, and Sir Dominic Cadbury

Cadbury reveals extent of its Russian losses

By Robert Cole, City Correspondent

CADBURY SCHWEPPES, the sweets and soft drinks company, lost nearly £100 million last year as a result of its aggressive attempts to expand in Russia.

The write-down of Russian assets cost the company £68 million. But trading losses of £16 million were also incurred. Profits in other continental European businesses were reduced by about £13 million as a knock-on effect.

The Russian losses, together with the absence of big one-off gains in the 1997 results, conspired to produce a 41 per cent fall in headline pre-tax profits for the year to January 2. However, the company said underlying profits rose 11 per cent.

The company also lived up to its promise, made two years ago, to increase underlying earnings per share by double-digit percentages and to generate free cashflow in excess of £150 million. The company also pledged to double shareholder returns inside four years, and reported that advances of 57 per cent had been achieved in 24 months.

Cadbury Schweppes agreed last December to sell its non-US soft drinks operations to Coca-Cola for £1.1 billion. The deal has yet to receive regulatory clearance and yesterday Sir Dominic Cadbury, chairman, said the sale was unlikely to be sealed until the third quarter of this year. Other disposals are expected to raise another £500 million.

The final dividend is 13.2p, lifting the total to 19p from 18p last time.

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Wickes back in the black

WICKES, the DIY and builder's merchant chain, delivered proof of its recovery by returning to the black with a pre-tax profit for 1998 of £24.9 million. The year before it made a loss of £6.5 million (Sarah Cunningham writes).

The company, whose former managers remain under investigation by the Serious Fraud Office after an accounting scandal two years ago, is doubling its capital expenditure to £50 million this year.

Underlying sales in the year to December 31 rose from £518 million to £538 million. Like-for-like sales in the six weeks to February 13 have been 0.8 per cent higher.

Earnings were 32.3p a share (9.1p loss). A final dividend of 4p (2p) makes a total of 6p (2p).

Talk Radio's OFT call

TALK RADIO, the national commercial speech radio station, has complained to the Office of Fair Trading because *Radio Times* will not carry its listings (Raymond Snoddy writes). Talk Radio alleges "anti-competitive discrimination by one arm of the BBC to favour its own programmes". *Radio Times*, part of BBC Worldwide, the BBC's commercial arm, says the station's audience is too small to justify listings.

Shareholders in Talk Radio include News International, owner of *The Times*.

Logica chief promises to improve margins

By Chris Ayres

MARTIN READ, chief executive of Logica, yesterday vowed to improve margins at the IT services group while pushing ahead with its aggressive international expansion policy.

He made his promise as Logica — whose main activities are systems integration, consulting and outsourcing — reported a strong set of results, with interim pre-tax profits rising 67 per cent to £26 million. In spite of the results, shares of Logica — which are valued at more than 60 times forecast earnings — slipped 10p to 663½p.

Analysts said many institutions were worried that the company was overvalued at £2.5 billion and were taking profits. However, the company's results, which saw sales rise 35 per cent to £292 million in the six months to December 31, were in line with City expectations.

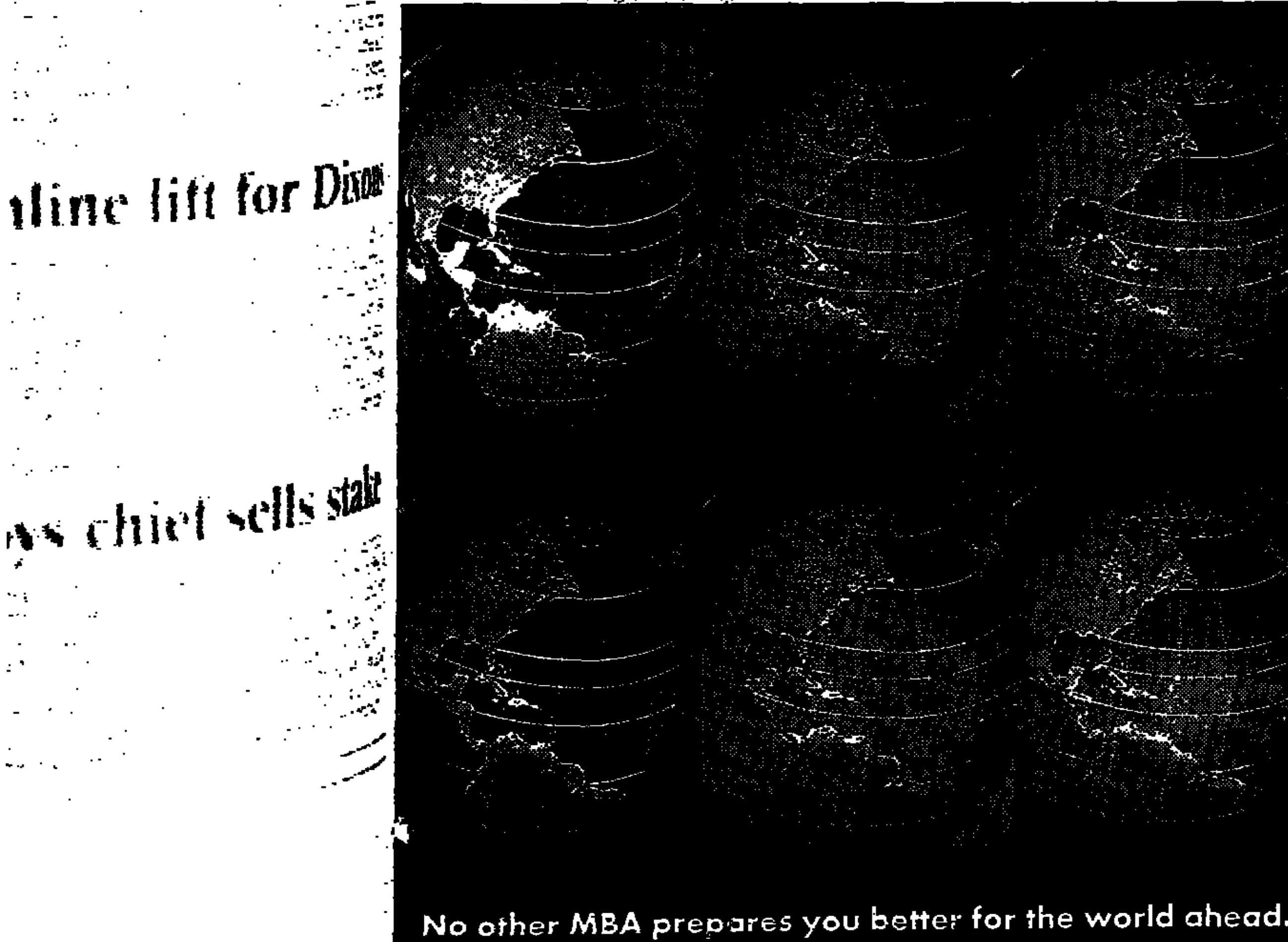
Logica's results also outshone those of Admiral and Sema, its competitors, which have both reported over the past few days. A bearish trading statement from Admiral on Tuesday helped to fuel speculation that the IT sector is heading for a sharp correction. However, Dr Read said he was not concerned about Logica's high valuation. "The only thing I worry about is delivering outstanding results to the City," he said.

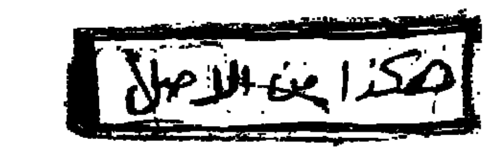
Although margins had risen from 7.2 per cent to 8.9 per cent during the half-year period, Dr Read admitted they were below those of many of its rivals.

He also admitted that much of Logica's growth would come from expansion abroad. The company has made several foreign acquisitions over the past year. "I want to go on buying companies," he said. "We need to be bigger in the US. But we also have to make sure they fit our overall strategy."

Dr Read said he was looking at up to six acquisitions, and could consider moving into the disaster-recovery business with the acquisition of a company such as Guardian IT.

Logica is paying an interim dividend of 1.15p (0.9p).







Blue chips surge as investors pour in cash

THE sheer weight of money pouring into the market yesterday sent share prices soaring to their highest levels ever.

The FTSE 100 index powered to a new closing high of 6,307.6 up 152.4 having briefly touched a new intra-day high of 6,316.6 as a total of 1.06 billion shares changed hands. An opening rise on Wall Street also supported sentiment.

Gains among second-liners were more subdued, reflected by the FTSE 250 index, which closed 33.8 up at 5,220.2.

The recent cash handouts by companies such as **Halifax**, up 18p to 793½p, and **Woolwich**, 14½p better at 399½p, means that more money has been released into the system, which will find its way back into the marketplace. To that must be added the £5 billion share buyback announced by **Unilever**, 3½p lighter at 621p, announced on Tuesday.

"There is just too much weight of money chasing too few shares," was the verdict of one leading broker. And with further share buybacks and cash handouts envisaged, the equity market looks destined to keep on rising — for the time being at least.

Best performances among the leaders were seen in **HSBC**, up 113p to £17.83, **Dixons**, 73p better at £11.63, **Hays**, 33½p higher at 589½p, **Ladbroke**, 16p up to 288p and **BTR Siebe**, 13p higher at 255¾p.

Scottish & Newcastle, up 37½p to 707½p, was also sought after. There is talk it may decide to beat **Whitbread**, 38p higher at 923p, to the punch and launch a bid for **Greenalls**, up 12p to 386½p.

There may be some bullish news on the way for Britain's hard-pressed housebuilders. Word is official figures, due out soon, will reveal a sharp increase in new housing starts. Brokers say the sharp drop in interest rates during the past few months has begun to encourage buyers and will be sure to stimulate demand for housebuilders.

Selective support was seen as **Berkeley Group** firmed 1p to 563½p, **Bovis**, 2½p to 235p, **Beazer**, 1½p to 168p, **McCarthy & Stone**, 3½p to 171½p, and **Wilson Bowden**, 10p to 577½p.

Recent weakness in shares of **Compass**, up 27½p at 743p, has provided investors with a buying opportunity. That is according to Goldman Sachs, the US securities house, which has been telling clients the price of the contract caterer has fallen far enough. It has underperformed the FTSE All-share index by 15 per cent since hitting a high of 809½p last month.



There was support for housebuilders as brokers said the fall in interest rates was translating into new housing starts

Revived speculative buying drove **First Choice** 9½p higher to 160½p as almost one million shares changed hands. There is talk of a bid at about 220p, which would value the package tour operator at £742 million.

There seems to be no stopping **Arm Holdings**, 427½p, or 20.9 per cent, dearer at £24.67½ following news of its alliance with 3Com Corporation aimed at focusing on advanced networking products. The loss-making microchip specialist has soared from a low of 750p in May, and currently trades on a p/e of 148. Unfortunately, Arm is an illiquid market where traders will only make a price in 2,000 shares at a time.

Calluna continued to reel from the profit warning that came after the official close of business on Tuesday, with the price dropping 7p, or 30 per cent, to 16p.

Keep an eye on **Quality Software Products**, 35p better at 395p. Followers of the stock claim there is good news on the way with the group having secured an important contract. Full-year results on March 24, should make pleasant reading.

Brokers came away from Tuesday's post-results meeting with NXT in a bullish mood. They expect big things from the company that makes flat audio speakers. The shares responded with a rise of 12p to 493½p.

Vymura also put on 8p at 81½p in the wake of Tuesday's results. The company yesterday gave a series of presentations to a number of number of Scottish fund managers and came away having clearly made a favourable impression.

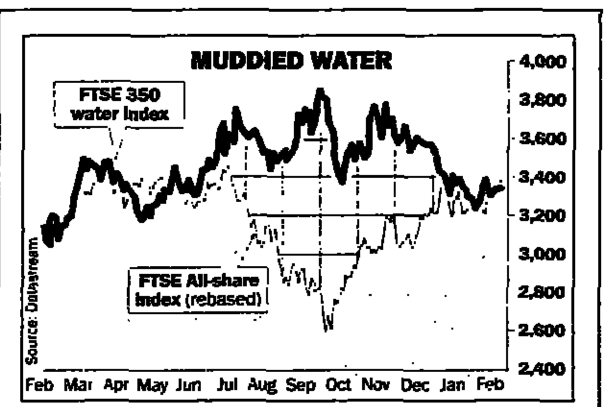
Atlantic Telecom stood out with a rise of 15p at 167p after being awarded five new regional licences to provide fixed radio access services.

Torex drew strength from recent profit numbers with price jumping 14½p to 156p. This week the company has been meeting Scottish fund managers. Teather & Greenwood, the broker, rates the shares a "buy". A "buy" recommendation from Albert E Sharp, the broker, hoisted **Bodycote International** 52½p to 795p.

□ **GILT-EDGED:** Bond prices opened lower in thin trading reflecting earlier falls by US Treasury bonds. Attempts at a rally later in the session quickly ran out of steam leaving prices lower on the day across the yield curve.

In the futures pit, the March series of the long gilt finished 19p down at £117.67 as 30,000 contracts were completed. Among conventional issues, Treasury 8 per cent 2021 fell 58p to £149.02, while Treasury 7 per cent 2002 dipped 3p to £107.23.

□ **NEW YORK:** US shares were stronger in the wake of Alan Greenspan's upbeat congressional testimony. At midday the Dow Jones industrial average was up 19.72 points to 9,564.14.



THE next few weeks may prove stressful for investors in the water companies.

The companies must submit their business plans to Ofwat, the industry regulator, by April 9, and the Government will, in turn, confirm their environmental obligations. Ofwat says the environmental component could be as much as £8.5 billion while at the same time aggressively challenging the industry's capital expenditure costs.

Merrill Lynch, the broker, cautions that this is likely to prove unsettling and could prompt a sell-off of the sector.

Since early October, water stocks have underperformed the rest of the market by about 30 per cent. As a result Merrill has moved from "underweight" to "neutral" but remains cautious.

Unregulated earnings will assume much greater significance after 2000, which will be good news for the likes of Pennon, down 7½p at £10.73½, and Thames, 1p firmer at £10.58.

MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday):
Dow Jones ... 9564.14 (+19.72)
S&P Composite ... 1277.37 (+6.19)

Tokyo:
Nikkei Average ... 14355.45 (−145.20)

Hong Kong:
Hang Seng ... 9677.57 (+243.58)

Amsterdam:
AEX Index ... 538.84 (+2.15)

Sydney:
AO ... 2934.5 (+10.5)

Frankfurt:
DAX ... 5062.31 (+74.75)

Singapore:
Straits ... 1410.98 (+10.55)

Brussels:
BEL20 ... 3405.25 (−39.05)

Paris:
CAC-40 ... 4213.70 (+5.75)

Zurich:
SKA Gen ... 1382.00 (+11.90)

London:

FT 30	3793.1 (+70.2)
FTSE 100	6307.6 (+152.4)
FTSE 250	5220.2 (+33.8)
FTSE 350	2974.4 (+64.0)
FTSE Eurotop 100	2881.07 (+36.06)
FTSE All-Share	2871.61 (+59.23)
FTSE Non Financials	2910.19 (+55.15)
FTSE Fixed Interest	156.47 (−0.18)
FTSE Govt Secs	114.97 (−0.35)
Bargains	89800
SEAQ Volume	1068.3m
US$	1.5987 (−0.0124)
Euro	0.6851 (+0.0035)
£ SDR	1.1875
Exchange index	101.0 (−0.6)

Bank of England official close (4pm)
RPI ... 163.4 Jan (2.4%) Jan 1987 = 100
RPIX ... 161.8 Jan (2.6%) Jan 1987 = 100

RECENT ISSUES

AIM VCT	100	...	
Abbey Natl Dublin Inv	88	...	
Acorn Income Fund	101½	...	
BFS O'seas Inc & Gwth Cap	98	...	
BFS O'seas Inc & Gwth Inc	120		
Close Bros Dev VCT	100	...	
Enhanced Zero Trust	100½	−	½
Gander Properties	7¼	..	
Golden Prospect	29½	..	
Jupiter En Zero Dv Pf	108	+	¼
Jupiter Enhanced Inc	98½	...	
Luminar Warrants	265	...	
NBA Quantum	109½	...	

RIGHTS ISSUES

Brancote n/p (10)	1¼	..	
Peptide Theraptcs n/p (78)	18½	−	2½

MAJOR CHANGES

RISES:

Stock	Close	Chng	Chng%
Estates Agency	550	+100	+ 22.2
ARM Holdings	2467½	+427½	+ 20.9
Acorn	190	+ 26½	+ 16.2
Lorien	176½	+ 24	+ 15.7
BGR	172½	+ 22½	+ 15.0
Easynet	300	+ 39	+ 14.9
Simon Grp	43	+ 5	+ 13.1
Versailles Grp	130½	+ 13½	+ 11.5
Global	12½	+ 1¼	+ 11.1
Cortecs	22¾	+ 2¼	+ 10.9
Vymura	81½	+ 8	+ 10.8
BTG	317	+ 29½	+ 10.2
Torex	156	+ 14½	+ 10.2
Black Arrow	92½	+ 8½	+ 10.1
Quarto	77	+ 7	+ 10.0
Atlantic Telecom	167	+ 15	+ 9.8
Wyko	95	+ 8½	+ 9.8
Select App	816	+ 69½	+ 9.3
Wtrford Wdgwd	49	+ 3½	+ 7.6
Chesterfield	422½	+ 29	+ 7.3
Bodycote	795	+ 52½	+ 7.0
Spring Ram	7¼	+ ½	+ 6.8
Sports & Out Media	77½	+ 5	+ 6.8
Mayflower	155½	+ 10	+ 6.8
HSBC	1783	+113	+ 6.7
Dixons Grp	1163	+ 73	+ 6.6
Zergo	760	+ 47½	+ 6.6

FALLS:

Stock	Close	Chng	Chng%
Cityview	25½	− 5½	− 17.7
Mountview	2000	−300	− 13.0
Ashton	21¼	− 3	− 12.3
HIT Enter	635	− 80	− 11.1
Old Eng Pub	112½	− 10	− 8.1
Admiral	1187½	−102½	− 7.9
Stathcare	162½	− 12½	− 7.1

TEMPUS

Turning up the gas

THE old British Gas empire becomes less recognisable by the day. On Tuesday, two years after the demerger of the privatised utility, BG moved steps closer to dividing itself again. Meanwhile Centrica, the household gas sales side of the already demerged British Gas, is selling electricity, heating engineering services, electrical appliance repairs, credit cards and insurance. In addition, it harbours ambitions to become a plumber, and mortgage provider. Almost unbelievably it also has designs on the Royal Automobile Club.

As well as becoming less like old British Gas and its sibling BG, Centrica is also invading the "dirtier" operations most thought it had left behind. Centrica is a gas producer and it wants to buy power stations.

But can Centrica be this many things to so many people successfully? It will not be easy. Even if one sees the coherence in Centrica strategy of developing a range of household services, the company is trying to play in very different areas from those in which it has experience. It may make sense for this gas supplier to move into the provision of another utility — electricity. But does it have the skills to take on the likes of Direct Line, the Automobile Association and the Abbey National at their own, very competitive games? In its own specialist arena, for instance, it had to endure the disastrous take-or-pay gas contracts that inflicted so much damage.

Yet, at launch, cynics were also quick to ridicule the now successful Goldfish credit card. There is no reason why careful expansion into other consumer utility activity should not work. Now Centrica has burst back on to the dividend list. hold the shares.

Cadbury

IT WAS not until investors digested the results from Cadbury Schweppes that the share price felt the heat. The stock tootled along until about 3 o'clock, then suddenly fell 34½p to £10, enough to make Cadbury the day's most disappointing FTSE 100 performer.

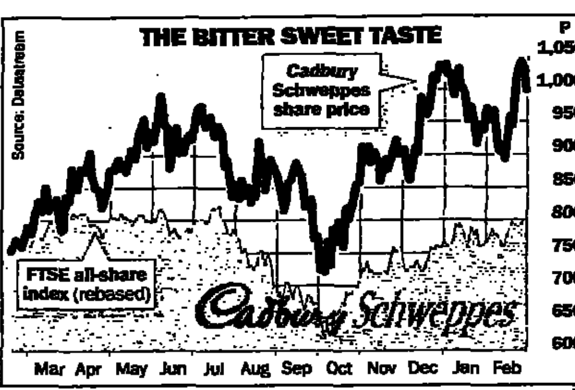
Earlier in the day the slick investor-relations machine at Cadbury succeeded in making the 1998 results look not just decent, but really quite good. It was encouraging to see Cadbury getting to grips with its cost base. And if investors ignore enough of the background noise, the figures do meet the stiff performance criteria Cadbury set itself two years ago.

But is it right to ignore losses in Russia and more exchange-rate disadvantages? Cadbury needs growth markets and the Russian problems delay delivery of that growth. Cadbury, a global business, also has to live with exchange-rate troubles.

Sales fell last year partly because Cadbury decided to sacrifice some volume for profit. But the sales growth remains the unanswered challenge.

Cadbury also disappointed because it not only failed to deliver a share buyback, but also indicated that it would prefer to spend the £1.6 billion disposal proceeds on acquisitions. To assure longer-term prospects Cadbury should acquire, but until it gets the money from the non-US drinks deal — which could be another six months — the share price performance is likely to be subdued.

Take profits.



Avis Europe

IT IS often said that rented cars go much faster than privately owned vehicles. They go on rougher ground too. The consequential worries about the residual values of cars in a hire fleet, therefore, are always likely to undermine the attraction of what it is, superficially, a healthy business.

The fluctuating price of shares in Avis Europe is testament to the contradictions at the heart of this industry. A softening European economy over the coming year does not help Avis either. The hire price rises achieved in the past 12 months are sure to be dampened and volume growth may be curtailed too.

Yet it was never likely that Avis could repeat the 44 per cent growth in pre-tax profits achieved in 1998. Moreover, profit margins remain healthy and some volume growth is expected. Short of an economic disaster in Europe, Avis remains well placed to record attractive earnings growth in the coming years.

In addition Avis operates in many tourist hotspots, particularly those frequented by well-heeled Americans, so its reliance on economy-specific fortunes is reduced.

At yesterday's closing price of 258½p, Avis shares trade on a prospective earnings multiple of about 18. This leaves healthy upside, though buyers should monitor their investment closely.

Select Ap'ments

SELECT Appointments is a well-spread operation, but one of its biggest attractions is that it offers arms-length exposure to the information technology sector. Two fifth of its business is in IT placement.

Select shares were badly undermined in the second half of last year. They dived to a low of just 353p in October from changing hands at £10.69 in July — proof positive that the recruitment sector stocks are sitting ducks as the darker economic clouds begin to gather. Select's industrial and geographical diversity should cushion it against economic adversity. But no one should delude themselves that Select is anything but vulnerable — especially because of its exposure to notoriously fickle IT.

At the July peak the Select shares were overstretched but at 353p they had also dropped too far. The shares have recovered, and helped by the 69½p or 9 per cent rise yesterday now trade at 816p. But at these levels the price is beginning to look toppy again.

Expectations are that Select will make £66 million of pretax profit in 1999, up from £53 million. The forward p/e is about 20. Assuming the profit targets are met this represents reasonable value. But the risks are also substantial.

EDITED BY ROBERT COLE

COMMODITIES

LIFFE — COCOA [illegible]

ROBUSTA COFFEE [illegible]

WHITE SUGAR (FOB) [illegible]

MEAT & LIVESTOCK COMMISSION [illegible]

ICIS-LOR (London 6.00pm) — CRUDE OILS ($/barrel FOB)

Brent Physical	10.65	−0.05
Brent 15 day (Apr)	10.55	−0.05
Brent 15 day (May)	11.10	−0.05
W Texas Intermediate (Apr)	12.45	n/c
W Texas Intermediate (May)	12.55	n/c

PRODUCTS ($/MT) [illegible]

IPE FUTURES (GNI Ltd) [illegible]

GNI LONDON GRAIN FUTURES

LIFFE WHEAT (close £/t)		LIFFE BARLEY (close £/t)	
Mar	71.75	Mar	74.50
May	74.00	May	75.25
Jul	76.00	Sep	74.25
Sep	74.75	Nov	76.50
Nov	76.50	Jan	78.50

LIFFE POTATO (£/t) [illegible]

RUBBER (No 1 RSS Cif p/kg) [illegible]

LIFFE BIFFEX (GNI Ltd $10/pt) [illegible]

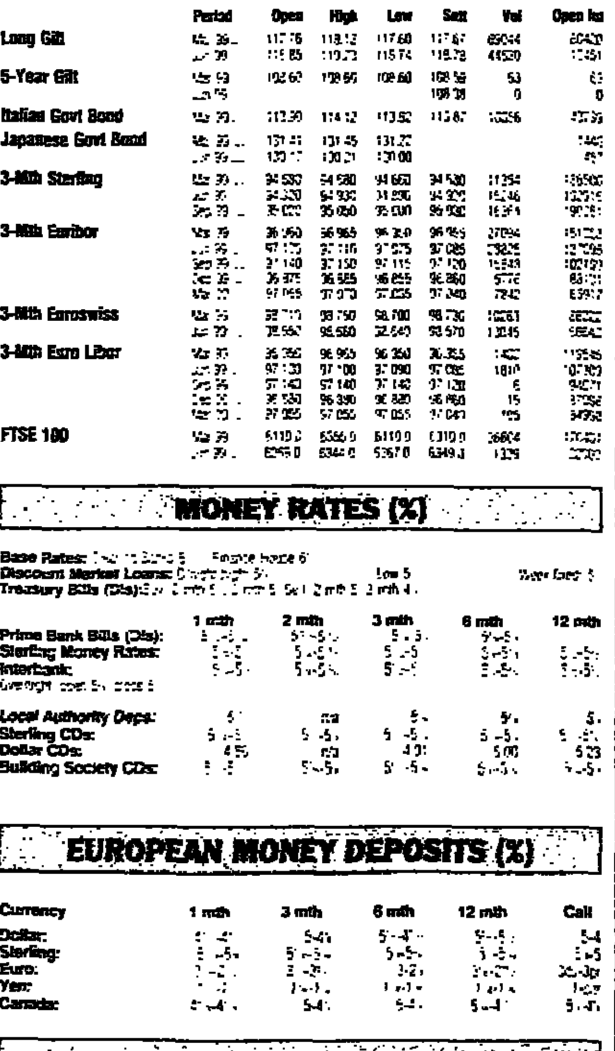
LONDON METAL EXCHANGE [illegible]

LIFFE OPTIONS

[illegible]

LONDON FINANCIAL FUTURES

	Period	Open	High	Low	Sett	Vol	Open Int
Long Gilt	Mar 99	117.76	118.12	117.60	117.67	65044	60420
	Jun 99	115.85	119.73	115.74	118.73	44520	[illegible]
5-Year Gilt	Mar 99	109.60	109.60	109.60	108.58	53	[illegible]
	Jun 99				108.08	0	0
Italian Govt Bond	Mar 99	113.30	114.12	113.52	113.87	[illegible]	[illegible]
Japanese Govt Bond	Mar 99	131.41	131.45	131.22			[illegible]
	Jun 99	130.17	130.21	130.00			[illegible]
3-Mth Sterling	Mar 99	94.530	94.580	94.660	94.530	11254	[illegible]
	Jun 99	94.320	94.930	94.890	94.920	15146	[illegible]
	Sep 99	95.020	95.050	95.000	95.030	16374	[illegible]
3-Mth Euribor	Mar 99	96.960	96.965	96.940	96.955	27094	[illegible]
	Jun 99	97.115	97.110	97.075	97.085	23825	[illegible]
	Sep 99	97.140	97.150	97.115	97.120	15543	[illegible]
	Dec 99	96.875	96.885	96.855	96.860	5776	[illegible]
	Mar 00	97.055	97.070	97.035	97.040	7842	[illegible]
3-Mth Euroswiss	Mar 99	98.710	98.750	98.700	98.730	10261	[illegible]
	Jun 99	98.560	98.560	98.540	98.570	13045	[illegible]
3-Mth Euro Libor	Mar 99	96.950	96.965	96.950	96.955	[illegible]	[illegible]
	Jun 99	97.100	97.100	97.090	97.085	1810	[illegible]
	Sep 99	97.140	97.140	97.140	97.120	6	[illegible]
	Dec 99	96.880	96.890	96.820	96.860	15	[illegible]
	Mar 00	97.055	97.055	97.055	97.040	105	[illegible]
FTSE 100	Mar 99	6110.0	6366.0	6110.0	6310.0	26604	[illegible]
	Jun 99	6255.0	6344.0	6267.0	6349.0	1325	[illegible]



MONEY RATES (%)

[illegible]

EUROPEAN MONEY DEPOSITS (%)

[illegible]

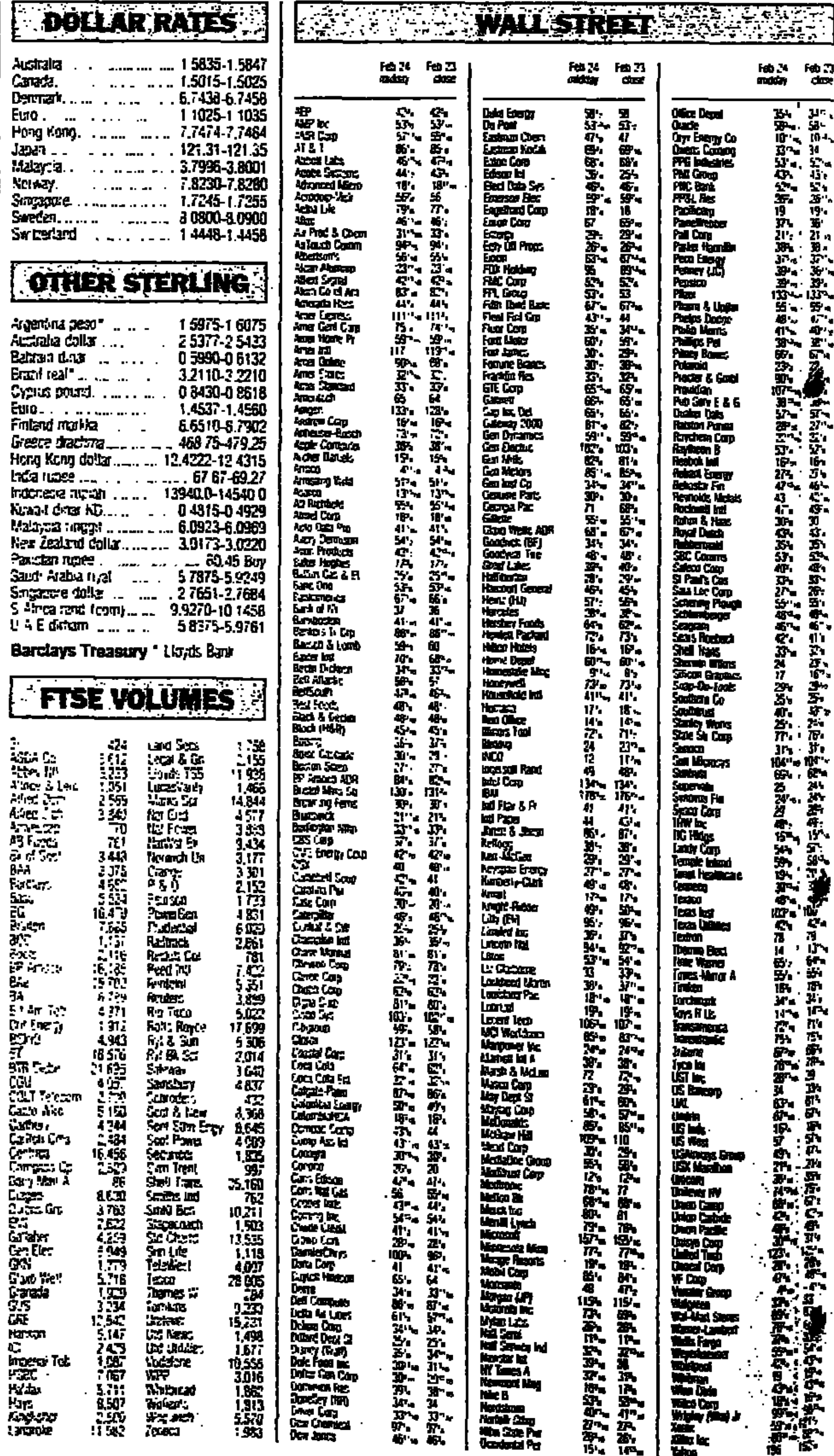
GOLD/PRECIOUS METALS (Baird & Co)

[illegible]

STERLING SPOT AND FORWARD RATES

[illegible]

Source: Extel



DOLLAR RATES

Australia	1.5835-1.5847
Canada	1.5015-1.5025
Denmark	6.7438-6.7458
Euro	1.1025-1.1035
Hong Kong	7.7474-7.7484
Japan	121.31-121.35
Malaysia	3.7996-3.8001
Norway	7.8230-7.8280
Singapore	1.7245-1.7255
Sweden	8.0800-8.0900
Switzerland	1.4448-1.4458

OTHER STERLING

Argentina peso*	1.5975-1.6075
Australia dollar	2.5377-2.5433
Bahrain dinar	0.5990-0.6132
Brazil real*	3.2110-3.2210
Cyprus pound	0.8430-0.8618
Euro	1.4537-1.4560
Finland markka	8.6510-8.7902
Greece drachma	468.75-479.25
Hong Kong dollar	12.4222-12.4315
India rupee	67.67-69.27
Indonesia rupiah	13940.0-14540.0
Kuwait dinar KD	0.4915-0.4929
Malaysia ringgit	6.0923-6.0969
New Zealand dollar	3.0173-3.0220
Pakistan rupee	80.45 Buy
Saudi Arabia riyal	5.7875-5.9249
Singapore dollar	2.7651-2.7684
S Africa rand (com)	9.9270-10.1458
U A E dirham	5.8375-5.9761

Barclays Treasury * Lloyds Bank

FTSE VOLUMES

[illegible]

WALL STREET

[illegible]

Spare us another Budget for virtue

Fiscal activism seems addictive for Labour governments. In the hectic 1970s, Denis Healey seemed forever to be catching up with events in extra mini-budgets. Twelve days hence, Gordon Brown is due to present his third Budget in 22 months. He has made two autumn pre-Budget statements, the first of which contained enough measures to have satisfied most Chancellors for a year. And remember that three-year public spending schedule, which seemed to settle matters until the next election programme.

You can understand Mr Brown's desire to get on with it. Both he and his supporters needed to release the pent-up energy accumulated during five frustrating years of unexpected Opposition and stumbling government between 1992 and May 1997.

Now, surely, it is time for a breather, time for a Budget to carry on as we are and let the reforms work through. After all, Mr Brown has has made much of setting a long-term course for a full Parliament and beyond. Forget it.

Not for nothing is the Chancellor nicknamed John Knox among true cognoscenti. The urge to keep up the work rate is compulsive.

Unfortunately, so is the political urge to foster puritan virtue and to indulge those deep-seated sentiments against middle-class comfort that Labour suppressed in its pre-election tax promises. Mr Brown's £5 billion a year tax on "middle class" pension savings, for instance, has overwhelmed all subsequent efforts by other ministers to boost saving for retirement.

The case for quietism might at least triumph in the Budget judgment, which is measured by the net impact of tax changes. If the Treasury believed in demand management, there might be a case for cutting taxes to soften the economic downturn that has already hit manufacturing hard and is gradually infecting the rest of the economy. By any forecast or comparison, the economy will grow below its long-term trend in 1999, if at all.

Mr Brown would have the perfect excuse to bung over a few billion extra for us to spend by bringing in his promised 10p initial income tax rate without paying for it elsewhere. No matter that hardly anyone else sees any point in yet more complication.

Pending a real reform of income tax rates, which would have to wait for a second Labour term, it would make more sense for incentives to raise the basic tax-free allowance to the product of a year's work at the minimum wage, even if the gain was initially limited to married couples or families.

Sadly, new Labour's obsession with targeting seems to rule out the common sense approach. Average and better off families would also benefit, which is anathema to those who think tax allowances are a form of welfare spending. We may still get tax on child benefit, although it would raise little unless the principle of separate taxation of spouses is reversed.



Big tax cuts to boost demand can safely be ruled out. The Chancellor does not believe in demand management. Treasury forecasts are more optimistic for the UK economy than most outsiders'. Unless those forecasts change, they project a one-year hiatus, before interest rate cuts restore "normal" growth in 2000. Public finances are even more buoyant than expected. Mr Brown is still anxious to stick to his self-imposed budgetary rules as well as to Maastricht limits, either of which could come into play if recession takes hold.

Under the heretical, self-flagellating Maastricht form of monetarism, there would even be a case to increase tax rates, or preferably to cut spending, to anticipate budgetary difficulties. Here at least the Chancellor's optimism is welcome. Under proper disciplines, deficits take the strain in bad times, just as surpluses should be built in good years. The case for masterly inaction is overwhelming.

Aggregate inaction just leaves more time for detailed changes. A reform of inheritance tax was on agenda long before someone noticed a loophole to allow an expensive house to be passed on without tax. The tax is relatively easily avoided by the truly rich and raises little money. That is not necessarily a bad thing but is bound to appal the Chancellor.

Does Mr Brown want to punish the rich or to raise revenue? He might want both. Tax lore suggests he must choose. If the great puritan can bear it and if there has to be an inheritance tax, it should be to raise money. That means tax rates should be extremely low, less than 20 per cent at the top end, so that any efforts to close loopholes are matched by lack of incentive to open new ones. The rich, like the poor, are always with us and we might as well accept it. We do not want a repeat of the capital gains tax reform, which will cause far more investment distortion.

In other directions, such as what are justified as "environmental" taxes, you may be sure that the rhetoric will not be matched by reality. Extra fossil fuel taxes, or imposts on cars, parking et al will be touted as incentives for people to change their behaviour. Like petrol taxes, however, they will surely be set to raise the maximum revenue. And that means that few of the lambasted anti-socials who suffer the imposts are intended to change their behaviour.

Far better if the Chancellor started to heed his own injunctions and prepare for the euro. Whatever Eddie George may say, this would logically require him to the inflation measure used for monetary policy to the lower measure used on the Continent, with or without a tightening of the inflation target. Mortgage interest relief should be restricted to fixed rate mortgages rather than be abolished and, to ease damaging distortion, duty on beer and spirts should be cut. But would John Knox approve?

UK insurers place premium on size as the predators gather

Marianne Curphey reports on the global consolidation gripping the insurance world

Executives of the UK's life and composite insurers could be forgiven for feeling anxious as the reporting season gets underway. However good their results may be, large and small companies alike are fighting for their professional lives.

Few of the UK's composite insurers are expected to remain as they are for long. Some analysts have even forecast that there will be no independent UK insurers left within five years.

More mergers that create large domestic companies such as Royal & SunAlliance and CGU are inevitable as the ability to offer clients global, rather than regional, expertise becomes increasingly important.

Even this may be insufficient to hold off European and American predators for long. AIG of the US, Allianz of Germany and Aegon of The Netherlands are on the prowl for UK insurers, and only the current high valuations of their UK targets are stopping the aggressors from making immediate bids.

Having attempted drastic cost-cutting through redundancies, domestic insurers are becoming increasingly nervous about losing market share to banks and supermarkets in their core areas and fighting off predatory approaches.

A series of takeovers — most recently the bid by AXA of France for the UK composite Guardian Royal Exchange — has already changed the face of the insurance market.

Last week Aegon, the Dutch parent of Scottish Equitable, propelled itself into the world insurance superleague by taking over the US financial services group Transamerica.

Aegon is now dwarfed only by AIG and Allianz. Aegon said it would have bought a European insurer had the prices been lower. Royal & SunAlliance, one of the bidders for GRE, has itself been named as a potential acquisition by Allianz.

These new, global players are now directing their energies towards one goal in particular — that of creating and nurturing a worldwide brand.

They have learnt the lesson of retailers and airlines who, having exhausted the avenues of price cuts and improved customer service, have found themselves forced to build brand in order to distinguish themselves from their rivals. This is becoming more important in general insurance too as it moves towards becoming a pure commodity product.

The big insurance players have also taken on some of the more aggressive marketing techniques of consumer goods manufacturers.

In the UK there is some evidence that niche players have woken up to the advantages of clever marketing. Direct Line, the motor insurer, caught on early to the commercial strength of branding with its red telephone.

Virgin Direct has sold its financial services products on the strength of Richard Branson's image as the man who dares to challenge the staid insurance industry.

The most recent example of focused brand-building is that shown by Sun Life & Provincial, AXA's 77 per cent-owned UK arm. Having made an offer for GRE, it now intends to ditch all the GRE and Guardian brands and repackage products under the AXA brand. Despite all the money GRE spent promoting Guardian Direct, AXA has decided the image is dated and does not hold enough sway with consumers.

AXA and Sun Life & Provincial have decided to keep the PPP healthcare brand, whose businesses GRE bought last year. Though it never released the figures, PPP is believed to have spent £50 million over three years building up its reputation and brand name through advertising.

Most analysts believe GRE overpaid for PPP because it was seduced by the brand even though the healthcare business had been making poor returns on its premium income.



Lord Hambro, chairman of GRE, left, and Lord Douro, chairman of Sun Life & Provincial

Branding is something that is also exercising the top minds at Prudential Corporation, as the company plans its expansion overseas. Although the Prudential name is well known in the UK, the company is unable to use it in the US and research has shown that there are thousands of small companies in South-East Asia called "Prudential".

Sir Peter Davis, group chief executive of Prudential, has been putting in place a strategy to distribute products via four distinct and very separate brands.

Egg, the direct brand, is a low-cost operation for customers who do not want advice. Prudential Retail Financial Services is the range of products sold by the insurer's direct salesforce. Scottish Amicable is the brand sold through independent financial advisers, while Prudential Portfolio Managers is the investment arm.

Before chief executives start writing blank cheques to advertising companies, however, they need to question whether the company matches up to the image created.

Pat Newberry, a partner and insurance specialist with PricewaterhouseCoopers, believes that in order to survive, insurers will have to act quickly. He said: "So many life companies have inadequate brands. A limited number have had some success in creating a trademark that conveys something of the company's nature and values.

"However, arguably, there is no company that has created a proper brand which defines the company's value proposition in the eyes of the customer in such a way that it draws the customer uniquely to the organisation, to buy its products in preference to those of another provider."

Most insurers will find changing the culture of their company the most painful transition of all. Many have old computer systems that give details about single products, rather than the spread of products owned by a single customer. When customers make inquiries, they are often shunted between different departments, which frustrates them.

Insurers have also failed to exploit the detailed information that they hold about existing clients, including salary and mortgage details. As a consequence, they have struggled to cross-sell products. This is also something Prudential is addressing by attempting to offset the cost of giving competitive rates on its direct banking and Egg accounts by branching out into mortgages and personal loans.

The information insurers hold is data that supermarkets and the airlines, experts in analysing shopping and travel patterns, are able to use much more effectively.

Mr Newberry predicts that database management, marketing, and quality of service to customers will become much more important than the traditional insurance values of claims settling and underwriting. This in turn will mean recruiting new staff and developing new products.

Life insurers face competition in their core areas from banks and building societies, from investment houses, such as Perpetual, which want to set up life companies, and from direct, low-cost insurers.

But banks have made less progress than was expected because they have failed to persuade consumers that they should buy all their financial products from one provider. They have also failed to exploit financial information effectively and have been unable to turn counter staff into salesmen and women.

Some insurers, such as Standard Life and Prudential, have fought back by expanding into the banks' territory. Royal & SunAlliance has concentrated its efforts on building up a top-class fund management team.

These may develop into good niche business but are unlikely to be enough to guarantee autonomy. Whatever the results reported by the insurers this week, their days as independent companies appear to be numbered.

Dreaded bug is creating big business



Widespread coverage in the Press of the millennium bug problem has helped many companies realise just how dependent they are on computer systems. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that companies providing so-called "disaster recovery" services are enjoying booming business.

This week, Guardian IT, the UK's largest disaster recovery company, reported a 29 per cent rise in sales, while its competitors — ranging from IBM to Compaq/Digital and Unisys — are enjoying similarly buoyant demand.

Customer are guaranteed that their corporate IT systems will be backed-up in an emergency. But it is clear from Guardian's research that many companies do not think it is worth paying hefty monthly premiums to protect themselves against what they see as a very small risk.

It is estimated that only 10 per cent of all companies with so-called "mission critical" IT systems take out such policies.

In some cases, companies believe that the millennium bug is the only real threat to their IT systems. According to Guardian, however, this is not the case. Everything from hardware failure to freak weather, computer hacking, and terrorist attacks (such as the Canary Wharf bomb in 1996), can lead to IT disasters.

Although only a handful of companies suffer IT disasters each year, when such problems do strike, they can be severe enough to put an unprepared company out of business for good. After all, who would trust a company that could not keep trading if its central database was destroyed in a fire or flood? It is already the law in some areas of the financial services industry for companies to have "provable" back-up IT systems in place. If Guardian is to be believed, this kind of regulation could soon extend to non-financial areas.

Many companies will justifiably find it irritating that the likes of Guardian can generate huge profits from contracts which are of use only in extreme and rare circumstances. Perhaps in the long term, as so-called "fault tolerant" IT systems develop, such contracts will be unnecessary.

But, as IT systems are vital to most company operations, the logic of disaster recovery looks inescapable.

☐ONE in every two shoppers would not venture to the High Street if they had the choice, says a survey, out today, by Gresham Computing. It is being used to demonstrate the untapped demand for Internet retailing.

It found that 54 per cent of consumers would like to buy goods for the best prices and have them delivered, without having to visit a shop. Among people aged 15 to 34, this rises to o 80 per cent.

CHRIS AYRES

High flyers

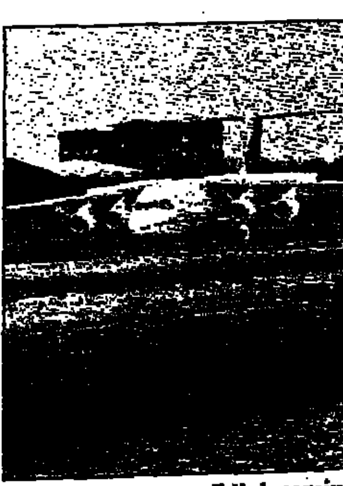
THE Docklands Light Railway is inviting builders and financiers to put in their plans for building a new rail link to London City airport, marking the start of the inevitable lengthy planning process.

No one can explain why, when they built the DLR out to Canary Wharf and beyond in the early 1990s, they did not link with the only airport there. The assumption is that the railway was being built with public funds and the planners did not think the privately owned airport would ever attract many passengers.

Now 1.4 million people a year fly from there. The DLR is setting a conservative opening date for the extension in 2003 at a cost of £75 million. Times having moved on, this is a public-private partnership, like the £260 million DLR extension down to Lewisham opening later this year.

This is being built by a consortium led by John Mowlem, the contractor — the same company, oddly enough, that built the airport and was nearly sunk by £90 million of losses from it.

Is Mowlem prepared to risk the curse of London City airport again? "They will certainly apply," says a source. "They would love to be involved."



City airport: new rail link coming



I HAVE no idea what he is doing there, but I have a sighting of David Montgomery, ousted chief executive of Mirror Group. He is hatching his plans at the headquarters of More Group, the outdoor poster business bought by Americans last year.

Monty, it seems, is a friend of More's Roger Parry, and he has been loaned an office in Golden Square, Soho, free. But Parry, wisely, is charging him for his phone calls.

Peyton place

THE fight of the year in the restaurant world will be the legal action between Oliver Peyton and Marco Pierre White over their respective ventures at the Regent Palace Hotel off Regent Street. Peyton is suing White, plus sundry other caterers, claiming the lease he holds on his Atlantic Bar & Grill precludes anyone else moving in on the hotel.

But Peyton's real target is Granada, owner of the hotel and in joint venture with White, whose new restaurant there, Titanic, has sparked the row. I understand that Granada will fight the case on the wording of the lease, which bars any competition except for Granada or any of its "associated companies or subsidiaries". This exclusion, it is claimed, must include MPW, the joint venture with White.

However, Peyton reckons he has them anyway. The phrase speaks of Granada "continuing" its businesses and was designed to exclude an existing restaurant there. The Titanic, of course, is a new venture.

"This lease was signed in 1994," Peyton tells me. "MPW and Granada didn't exist then. I'm not going to go away. All my legal advice" — from such as Linklaters & Paines — "is that this is a hands-down win."

THEY are giving unlimited vodka away free at the Broadgate Centre today. No, honest. From 11am through to 7pm, with a two-hour break in the afternoon.

The whole thing is a stunt for Stolichnaya. Not that it matters, because one vodka tastes like any other, after all. I ring to check on availability.

"If people come back for two drinks, I'm sure they will be given two," the publicity lady says. That wasn't quite what I was asking. "We are not going to encourage people to get absolutely ratted in the Broadgate Centre," she says sternly. I don't see how you can stop them.

Odds against

FURTHER fall-out from William Hill. Not only is Warburg Dillon Read, as I reported yesterday, being targeted by disappointed investors, plenty are also unhappy with the company itself and the £20 free betting voucher they are being offered.

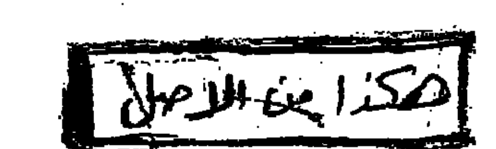
There are a few who are seriously offended by being asked to visit a betting office, although one has to wonder at the flexible personal morality that does not allow one to gamble but permits investment in a betting chain. Now the more knowledgeable punters are pointing out that the £20 voucher may not be as useful as it seems.

It provides a double on the result of the Lincoln and the Grand National. These are, I am told, two of the most difficult events to call in the racing calendar, and the chances of picking both winners are vanishingly small — more a lottery than a bet.

Surely a £20 bet redeemable on any event would have been better? Or would this have cost William Hill too much in genuine winners? And how much business has the loss of goodwill cost William Hill anyway?

MARTIN WALLER
city.diary@the-times.co.uk





Avis accelerates to outstrip market forecasts

By Paul Armstrong

AVIS EUROPE, the car rental group, has outstripped market forecasts with a 44 per cent jump in pre-tax profits to £8.7 million in 1998.

But it gave warning yesterday that a softer European economy would prevent it enjoying a repeat of the strong price and volume growth of last year.

Avis said revenue rose 14.3 *per cent to £576.3 million*, with increases recorded in all major markets.

Mark McCafferty, chief executive, said the company was confident it had lifted its 20 per cent share of the growing European car rental market. Alun Cathcart, chairman, said the company was well placed to deliver growth this year.

A final dividend of 3p was *declared, making 4.5p for the* year compared with 3.75p previously.

The result compared with market forecasts of about £96 million and saw investors mark up Avis shares by 6.5p to 261p. The stock, which was floated in April 1997, has had a *bumpy ride in the past six* months, due partly to its vulnerability to economic conditions.


Cathcart: confident of growth

Mr McCafferty said the expected impact on Avis of the weaker European economy *would be partly offset by the* expected rise in airline passengers, who provided half the company's earnings.

But this is unlikely to enable Avis to achieve its medium-term earnings growth target of between 10 and 12 per cent this year.

Mike Stoddart, an analyst with Charterhouse Tilney Securities, said: "Avis does not *really need big growth in operat*ing margins to have a great year. It will still show very good profit growth."

Avis also revealed yesterday that it had formed a joint venture with the Oberoi hotel chain in India and was studying ways to break into the Japanese and Chinese markets.

The move follows the company's £41.8 million purchase of *the 3 Arrows business in* December and the acquisition of its Greek licensee in July.

Tempus, page 32

Select puts profits up by 63% on niche buys

By Saeed Shah

SELECT Appointments, the fast-growing recruitment group, said it is to continue its policy of snapping up small niche *staffing operations — it has* bought four around the world in the last month alone — in a strategy which should see it through the £1 billion turnover level this year.

Reporting pre-tax profits up 63 per cent at £53.1 million for the year ended December 31 on turnover growth of 60 per cent at £831.8 million, Tony Martin, the chairman, said: "It's not *flashy, it's not sexy, but buying* lots of little things can give you a very good growth rate."

Robert Morton, analyst at Charterhouse Tilney, said: "They're a cracking set of figures. We will see more healthy growth this year, though they will inevitably be affected by the general economic downturn."

Mr Martin said the company has a war chest of £37 million *for acquisitions. Earnings per* share were 32.2p (22.9p). The company does not pay a dividend. The shares rose by more than 9 per cent, up 69½p to 746p.

RICHARD POHLE


Nick Irens, left, chairman, and Harm Tegelaars, chief executive, try a Cannons club spa

Cannons set to invest

CANNONS GROUP, the health and fitness club operator formerly known as Vardon, is limbering up to spend £115 million over the next three years (Dominic Walsh writes).

It will invest £33 million in 1999 opening Cannons units throughout the UK, including Barrow, Leicester, Northampton, Plymouth and Swindon. Six further sites are under negotiation, and the company hopes to open its first continental club, at Eindhoven, in 2000.

The investment marks the next phase of what has been a dramatic transformation over the past 15 months. During that time, it has sold its bingo, holidays and attractions arms for a total of £115 million, while acquiring the Cannons and Harbour Club brands.

Exceptional losses of £12.3 million from disposals sent pre-tax profits plunging from £16.3 million to £507,000 in 1998, although operating profits from continuing operations doubled to £9.5 million.

Earnings per share dipped from 9.0p to 8.1p, but the group said that it saw no sign of any trading downturn and it is lifting the final dividend to 1.76p (1.6p).

Dutch post office buys Zergo software

By Chris Ayres

SHARES in Zergo surged by 7 per cent yesterday when the IT security company said that PTT Post, the national postal authority of The Netherlands, had chosen to use *its software.*

Zergo produces software that encrypts data sent via e-mails and over the Internet. The software that it has supplied to the Dutch post office, called UniCERT, allows the organisation to confirm the identity of Internet users. This makes secure Internet transactions possible.

Roy Osinga, senior product manager of PTT Post, yesterday said: "Organisations and individuals are driving the growth of electronic trading, and we believe our company will play a pivotal role in the facilitation of this demand.

"Users' peace of mind will be key to the growth of e-commerce, which is why Baltimore UniCERT has a major role in our plans."

Shares in Zergo yesterday rose from 712½p to 762½p, compared with just 165p last November.

Ashanti boosted by hedging gold price

SUCCESSFUL hedging of the depressed gold price helped Ashanti Goldfields, the African mining group, to boost earnings before exceptional items in 1998 from $58.4 million to $73.9 million (£46 million). The company, with big operations in Ghana, secured a gold price last year of $385 an ounce, $91 ahead of the spot gold price. In last year's final quarter, Ashanti realised $143 million by closing hedging contracts and it currently has forward sale and put option contracts totalling 7.2 million ounces at an average price of $390 an ounce.

Ashanti's gold production rose a third to 1.5 million ounces last year. The cash cost of extraction fell 14 per cent to $218 an ounce. In November, Ashanti bought SAMAX Gold for $137 million, expanding the potential of Ashanti's Geita property in Tanzania, which now has gold resources of 6.4 million ounces, up from last year's 3.4 million ounces. Ashanti's year-end proven and probable reserves were 23 million ounces.

Licence lifts ARM

SHARES in ARM Holdings rose 18 per cent after the electronics group announced a technology licence with 3Com Corporation, the US group. The shares, which were up in early trading on reports of management meetings with analysts on ARM's prospects in the automotive industry, jumped to £24.15, up 315p, as the company said that 3Com would be using ARM's design capabilities in advanced networking products. The rise took ARM, which was floated last year, through the £1 billion market capitalisation level.

Diageo disposals

DIAGEO's UDV drinks arm, which on Monday sold eight Canadian whisky brands for $185.5 million, is to raise $171 million by selling some of its US brands. They are the Christian Brothers brandy and dessert wines business and the Old Charter, WL Weller, Old Fitzgerald and Rebel Yell bourbons, which have total sales of $75 million. The sale includes UDV's Bernheim distillery, in Louisville, Kentucky, but the company is keeping premium Tennessee whiskey and Kentucky bourbon brands such as George Dickel and IW Harper.

No suiter, says Devro

DEVRO, the maker of sausage skins, yesterday said that it noted takeover speculation surrounding a recent rise in its share price, but stated: "The board confirms that it has received no such approach from any third party." The shares have risen from a recent low of 140p after last summer's collapse from a high of 545p. A fall of just ½p, to 162½p, in the shares yesterday suggested that the market is still convinced that there is interest in the company. In autumn, Devro was strongly linked with Viscofan, a Spanish sausage skin maker.

Diagonal optimistic

DIAGONAL, the IT services group, said its order book is significantly ahead of this time last year after reporting a 98 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £7.3 million on turnover up by 57 per cent to £70 million in the year to November 29. Although there was strong earnings growth across all divisions, the company said that a weakening in the UK economic climate is likely to affect the contract agency market, though strong growth from *its consulting* activities is expected. Earnings per share were 24.8p (11.4p). The total dividend is 4.8p (2.6p).

Private Pemberstone

PEMBERSTONE, the quoted residential property company, is to be taken private through a reverse into another property company owned by Pemberstone's executive directors. Arcrent Properties yesterday offered 63p a share for Pemberstone, a 40 per cent premium to Tuesday's close, valuing the company at £32.3 million. The offer has been recommended by Pemberstone's non-executives, who said the company's shares had suffered from a change in sentiment by financial institutions.

Inveresk in the red

AN INTERNAL restructuring programme sent Inveresk, the paper and board producer, into the red last year. Pre-tax losses for the year to November 28 came in at £2.1 million after £4.6 million of exceptional charges. The previous year profits were £5 million. The *final dividend* is cut to 1.07p from 3.86p making a total of 3p (5.79p). However, Stefan Kay, chief executive, said that the company was now "a leaner and fitter group, ready to take advantage of a market upturn".

Domnick Hunter falls

DOMNICK HUNTER, the maker of filtration and purification equipment, said pre-tax profit for the year to December 31 was down 10 per cent to £8.6 million on turnover up to £70 million from £65 million. Brian Thompson, chairman, said the impact from the strength of sterling and the economic turmoil in the Far East was exacerbated by recessionary pressures elsewhere in the second half. An unchanged final dividend of 4.752 pence, makes 8.152p for the year.

Radical tax overhaul is only way

Sheena Sullivan urges the Chancellor to tackle key issues

The Pre-Budget Report of November 1998 focuses on four areas, broadly identified as: the foundation of long-term economic stability; removing the barriers to productivity; encouraging and rewarding work; and generally promoting "fairness".

Through targeted tax reform, the Chancellor wants to reward long-term commitment by employees and remove the old "them and us" culture in British industry. But this is the Government that has gone along with the withdrawal of profit-related pay (PRP), which started the process of linking pay/reward to profit/performance and breaking the automatic annual pay rise. There is no suggestion that any replacement for PRP is being *contemplated*.

Instead, share ownership is seen as the answer and, in particular, employees remaining as shareholders for a longer term. The attraction of share ownership used to be capital growth giving rise to capital gains tax (at a lower rate than income tax) and special reliefs such as retirement relief. However, capital gains are now taxed at income tax rates and reliefs are being withdrawn. Generally speaking, employees want cash not shares, but is long-term commitment from employees a realistic aim?

Existing Inland Revenue-approved share arrangements involve considerable administration for the relatively small sums involved and therefore the take up by small and medium-sized businesses is generally poor. Additionally, it is not clear how this crusade for wider employee share ownership helps the huge numbers of employees in unincorporated businesses.

The Chancellor wants to cut the burden of tax and red tape. The merger of the Inland Revenue and the Contributions Agency is a step in the right direction, but no steps have been taken to deal with the real problem: tax and national insurance systems that are unnecessarily complicated. Why does the Government not admit that national insurance is just another tax and undertake a radical overhaul of the way in which money is raised to meet public expenditure? The Chancellor stated that he is pro-tax simplification, but he has failed to address this in his proposals.

There is much talk about promoting "fairness" in taxation. It is generally agreed that you can have a simple tax system or you can have a fair tax system but you can't have a tax system that is both fair and simple. Of course, you can have a tax system that is neither fair nor simple and the proposed general anti-avoidance rule for direct taxes promises to be just that.

The Chancellor wants a business environment that encourages enterprise and entrepreneurs. This extends to investment by, and in, smaller businesses. He threatens to look at how the "improved" Enterprise Investment Scheme income tax and capital gains tax reliefs could encourage investors to make serial investment in smaller firms. Presumably repealing the whole of last year's Budget changes does not appeal to him?

It is a perennial complaint that tax is getting too complex for the Revenue to cope with, never mind the taxpayer. The wording of legislation is now being looked at by the Tax Law ReWrite Project, but the underlying policy is getting worse. Unfortunately, the policymaking process we have is not designed to give us simple law, but changes could be made immediately.

If this Government is truly pro-small business and pro-tax simplification, it could achieve all of the above aims and go down in history as a truly reforming force.

Sheena Sullivan is a tax partner in Pannell Kerr Forster


Sheena Sullivan says the Government has the opportunity to be a truly reforming force

Real time is virtually here

Finance directors can be forgiven for being bewildered. All the certainties of financial reporting are coming apart. Pundits keep telling them that real-time reporting is just around the corner. The Government seems on the verge of making the whole set of financial reporting rules a hostage to fortune by, possibily inadvertently, handing responsibility for them to Brussels.

And the whole emphasis on why financial reporting is there in the first place is being turned upside down. Real-time reporting has moved closer simply because the technology has become faster by the day and its usage has moved from being elitist to commonplace in a remarkably short period of time.

Meanwhile, the Department of Trade's company law review will today put forward the choice of sticking with UK reporting rules or going with the international rules. This doesn't sound terribly important. However, to go international would have two consequences.

First, it would abandon the UK's highly influential voice in the world of Anglo-Saxon accounting, which includes America, Australia and Canada and much of the way that the world's largest companies report. And secondly, it would create a vacuum into which an embryo European accounting standards regulator would like to step. The result would leave the American standard-setters supreme and would create the possibility that Brussels would have the power to grind the market into the dust of due process. Either would result in form triumphing over substance. And that leaves financial directors dangling.

[redacted]

ROBERT BRUCE

The third certainty of whom all this information is for has probably already changed. This week the Scots ICA released yet another tranche of highly influential research. The lead document is entitled *Business Reporting: The Inevitable Change?* and offers some sensible ways forward. It starts from a simple premise. "It is to be expected that business reporting will become user-driven rather than producer-driven," it says, "ie. there will be a power shift from producers to consumers, as is occurring in many other parts of the economy." As many others have predicted, this will mean that much more information will be required to be disclosed. It will make the current quantity of financial information look small by comparison. In the past companies have always argued that to expand disclosure only risks what they call "information overload" among the users.

But the extensive Scots research into what people actually want blows that argument out of the water. The only users of accounts who had a problem with information overload were small shareholders. Everyone else wanted much more information, particularly on future prospects, the quality of management and anything else that would enhance their ability to assess future performance. The research recognises, sensibly enough, that radical proposals scare companies rigid and are counter-productive. So they have come up with seven proposals which aim to gradually shift the emphasis towards what users want. They suggest that some kind of corporate library of information be made available electronically with a facility for layering the information so that expert users could gain more complex information while the average small shareholder could gain simplified information.

Different stakeholder groups should receive information structured in different ways to suit their needs. Records of company meetings should be placed in an accessible archive, as would the minutes of one-to-one meetings between the company and analysts. Systems to allow online questioning of management should be created. A wider range of information to enable users to assess the quality of management, or company strategy or risk, would be created. This would largely be non-financial and forward-looking. Greater frequency of disclosure, though still on a regular rather than real-time basis, should occur and a prospectus-type report should be produced every few years. And then comes the key. "Open access to a large part of the corporate database necessitates a shift towards the assurance of processes, not just outputs," says the report.

The great danger is that as the information disclosed moves from the hard issues of figures to the soft issues of prospects, companies will move back to the comfortable days when unaudited chairman's statements said that everything was rosy while the audited figures suggested that the company was about to fall off a cliff.

We have already had research this year from Professor Roger Hussey, of Bristol Business School, which suggested that much corporate information on the Internet has never had any independent assurance applied to it. The problem will worsen. It is much harder to say that a company's stated prospects for the future have a ring of truth to them than to report on the total of fixed assets.

Small wonder that the Scots report suggests that one area for further research should be into the skills base of professional accountancy firms. A change of emphasis from an assurance of financial probity to an assessment of the quality of wider corporate information will require a very different approach.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Drive to get golf put into reports

THE business world is constantly seeking ever-more sophisticated methods of performance measurement. And considerable competitive edge relies on devising these methods. So we should all be grateful to Professor John Baillie, the convener of the Scots ICA's research committee, for coming up with a new one. Speaking this week at the launch of a mass of new research into the future trends in financial reporting, he said that users of reports increasingly wanted to evaluate the quality of management. "Companies should have to publish the golf handicaps of their directors. And they should have to explain in the accounts why their golf handicaps were going up. Or more importantly, why they were going down." And to think that in England people think that "links" is something to do with the Internet.

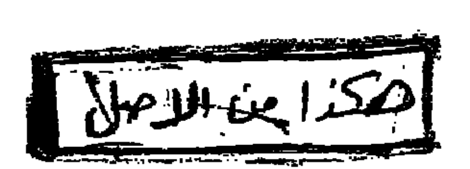
A Touche firm

ENTHUSIASTS of the "On This Day" feature in this newspaper may have missed the significance of the short piece published on Monday. It was a letter to the Editor dating from February 22, 1911. In it, the writer, then MP for Islington North, complained about the danger to life and limb being caused by the youth of Stoke Newington rollerskating along the pavements and up-ending little old ladies and other pedestrians in their path. He lambasted the Home Secretary, one Winston Churchill, for his failure to take action. "He may rest assured," the writer concluded, "that, if he takes no action, he will soon be the most unpopular man in London." And who was this public-spirited MP? None other than George Touche, the founding father who put the Touche into what is now known as the mighty accounting firm of Deloitte & Touche.

Green uncommon

AT THE annual presentation of the Environmental Reporting Awards this week, sponsored by the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, there was enormous optimism, despite there being only 40 entries, that such reporting would ere long become the norm. They should have looked at the research findings of the Scots ICA, unveiled the day before. Its survey of what users of accounts rated as factors in a company's performance showed that out of 29 factors "impact of environmental issues" came in at number 26.

ROBERT BRUCE



THE TIMES UNIT TRUST INFORMATION SERVICE

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
AIB GOVETT UNIT TRUST LTD				
0171 378 7979 Dealing: 0171 407 7888				
Protected Funds				
UK Safeguard	145.59	155.14	+ 0.17	
-do- NAV to Jan 19	140.39	140.39	...	...
UK Equity Safeguard	116.52	124.63	+ 0.32	2.02
-do- NAV to Mar 19	110.98	110.98		
US Eqy Safeguard	100.18	106.38	+ 0.63	
Cash	952.74	957.50	...	6.25
UK Growth Funds				
UK Equity Gen	444.65	471.33	+ 3.41	1.80
UK Small Cos	90.31	96.58	+ 0.77	0.50
FTSE 250 Index	105.81	113.17	- 0.17	1.89
Geared UK Index	#25.205	#25.607	+ 0.33	5.75
Income Funds				
Corp Bd	88.23	91.10	+ 0.14	6.66
Monthly Inc	44.57	47.66†	+ 0.11	7.58
International Funds				
American Gen	388.92	410.96	+ 3.75	0.17
American Strat	179.63	191.79	+ 3.27	...
JG US Index	#30.517	#32.151	+ 0.32	4.59
European Gen	449.88	474.92	+ 7.24	
European Strat	213.66	228.19	+ 2.27	
Japan Gen	104.48	110.58	- 0.02	
Asia Pacific	62.14	66.30	+ 0.80	1.09
Pacific Strat	84.94	90.84†	+ 0.70	
Greater China	138.83	147.62	+ 1.92	
Latin America	57.99	61.97	- 0.20	
Int Growth	199.19	212.75	+ 1.54	0.11
Balanced Exempt	182.71	189.33		2.18
Global Strategy	47.92	51.22	- 0.43	
AXA EQUITY & LAW UNIT TST MGRS				
01289 553 231				
AXA Equity & Law Unit Trst				
Balanced Acc	85.06	90.49	+ 0.65	1.68
Balanced Inc	76.42	81.30	+ 0.59	1.68
Brit Exempt	135.20	143.80	+ 1.30	2.21
Brit Fndmtls Acc	172.50	183.50	+ 0.90	3.88
Brit Fndmtls Inc	107.00	113.80	- 0.60	3.88
Europe	586.80	624.30	+13.10	0.29

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
CANADA LIFE MGMT (UK) LTD				
01707 522 100				
Cap Gen Dist	325.80	345.30†	- 4.00	0.97
-do- Income Dist	177.90	188.50	- 1.40	2.62
-do- Accum	612.60	649.30	- 4.90	2.62
Gilt & Fxd Int	48.15	50.59†	- 0.05	3.90
Growth Units	392.80	419.50	- 4.30	1.11
Bond	205.50	216.60†	- 0.40	4.50
Int Growth	279.10	296.30	- 4.50	0.11
North American	432.30	458.60	- 5.20	
Far East	167.10	178.70	+ 1.80	0.97
UK Smaller Cos	276.10	292.30	+ 0.90	1.15
European	143.30	152.00	- 3.60	0.13
Japanese Growth	30.03	31.81	- 0.44	
High Income	310.20	331.50	- 2.90	2.65
CAPEL-CURE MYERS UT MGMT LTD				
0181 831 7433 Enq 0181 831 7433 Dlg 0181 831 7455				
American & Gen	382.50	404.50	- 4.90	
European Inc	158.30	167.90	- 3.30	
Smaller Cos (4-1)	113.30	120.60	- 0.30	2.06
Growth	772.90	822.30†	- 6.20	1.11
Income & Growth #	601.40	639.80†	- 5.70	4.31
-do- Accum #	996.60	1060.30	- 9.50	4.31
Japan & Gen	51.35	54.26	- 0.56	
Hallmark Gwth	1787.00	1862.00†	+18.00	0.82
-do- Accum	2276.00	2371.00	+23.00	0.82
Special Sits	177.40	188.80†	- 1.30	1.11
High Yield	1975.00	2037.00	-18.00	3.68
CAZENOVE UNIT TRUST MGMT LTD				
0171 606 0708				
Cazenove Portfolio	127.14	135.08		2.01
American Portfolio	209.71	222.16	- 1.11	0.37
European Portfolio	227.86	242.47	+ 2.03	0.27
High Income	59.96	63.34†		6.90
Japanese Portfolio	47.77	50.60†	- 0.04	
Pacific Portfolio	104.44	112.31	- 1.17	1.30
UK Equity	127.23	135.69		2.70
UK Equity & Bd	73.68	78.13		4.92

Shares scale new heights

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

BANKS

BREWERIES, PUBS & REST

BUILDING MATERIALS

CHEMICALS

CONSTRUCTION

DISTRIBUTORS

DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS

ELECTRICITY

ELECTRONIC & ELECT

ENGINEERING

ENGINEERING, VEHICLES

FOOD MANUFACTURERS

HEALTHCARE

HOUSEHOLD GDS & TEXT

INSURANCE

INVESTMENT TRUSTS

LEISURE & HOTELS

MEDIA

MINING

OIL & GAS

OTHER FINANCIAL

PHARMACEUTICALS

PRINTING & PAPER

PROPERTY

RETAILERS, FOOD

RETAILERS, GENERAL

SUPPORT SERVICES

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

TRANSPORT

WATER

ALTERNATIVE INV MARKET

BRITISH FUNDS

SHORTS (under 5 years)

1998/99 High	Low	Stock	Price £	+/-	Int yld %	Grs red yld
102.63	100.00	Treas 9½% 1999	100.0000	..	9.50	6.51
106.31	100.58	Exch 12¼% 1999	100.5326	-0.0235	12.19	5.37
104.90	101.79	Treas 10½% 1999	101.1940	-0.0185	10.38	5.12
100.50	98.84	Treas 6% 1999	100.4568	-0.0074	5.97	4.96
108.46	103.62	Conv 10¼% 1999	103.7858	-0.0344	9.88	4.91
105.02	102.56	Conv 9% 2000	104.0621†	-0.0378	8.65	4.85
105.84	102.22	Treas 8% 2000	105.3598	-0.0380	7.58	4.80
103.84	101.81	Treas 8½% 2000	103.2431	-0.0378	8.23	4.87
114.88	110.58	Treas 13% 2000	110.8067	-0.0547	11.73	4.82
110.37	107.11	Treas 10% 2001	109.7523†	-0.0522	9.11	4.81
106.51	100.71	Treas 7% 2001	105.7855	-0.0350	6.62	4.68

MEDIUMS (5 to 15 years)

1998/99 High	Low	Stock	Price £	+/-	Int yld %	Grs red yld
108.13	101.42	Treas 7% 2002	107.2344	-0.0337	6.53	4.53
117.29	111.19	Treas 9¾% 2002	116.1355†	-0.0423	8.40	4.79
110.21	100.62	Treas 6½% 2003	108.7589	-0.0565	5.98	4.43
114.74	100.58	Treas 8% 2003	113.2868	-0.0484	7.06	4.54
123.62	115.44	Treas 10% 2003	121.7923†	-0.0575	8.21	4.67
113.98	110.00	Treas 11½% 2001-04	112.8018	-0.0621	10.19	4.86
98.98	80.17	Fund 3½% 1999-04	97.0211	-0.1640	3.61	4.12
126.43	116.53	Conv 9½% 2004	124.5432	-0.0285	7.83	4.53
113.28	101.84	Treas 6¾% 2004	111.6751	-0.0194	6.04	4.42
125.31	113.08	Treas 8½% 2005	123.1035	-0.0607	6.90	4.50
128.70	117.51	Conv 9½% 2005	136.1428	-0.0494	7.53	4.57
135.66	127.40	Treas 12½% 2003-05	133.4473	-0.0575	9.37	4.32
121.62	107.89	Treas 7¾% 2006	119.2020	-0.1067	6.29	4.54
122.40	108.57	Treas 7¾% 2006	120.0865†	-0.1027	6.45	4.56
111.79	104.98	Treas 8% 2002-06	110.5723	-0.0143	7.24	4.74
126.29	119.81	Treas 11¾% 2003-07	125.0865	-0.0423	9.39	4.12

1998/99 High	Low	Stock	Price £	+/-	Int yld %	Grs red yld
129.96	114.99	Treas 8½% 2007	127.1701	-0.1382	6.68	4.58
122.55	106.98	Treas 7¼% 2007	119.6633	-0.1957	6.06	4.51
138.52	121.18	Treas 9% 2008	135.6181	-0.1959	6.64	4.41
114.67	99.36	Treas 5¾% 2009	111.9580	-0.2987	5.14	4.34
132.07	113.85	Treas 8% 2009	129.8787	-0.3083	6.16	4.43
118.76	99.44	Treas 6¼% 2010	116.3683	-0.3021	5.37	4.44
145.31	124.09	Conv 9% 2011	142.3099	-0.3323	6.32	4.50
147.74	125.04	Treas 9% 2012	144.4672	-0.3782	6.23	4.54
112.26	93.28	Treas 5½% 2008-12	109.8602	-0.1918	5.01	4.23
133.56	112.61	Treas 7¾% 2012-15	130.6400	-0.3772	5.93	4.58

LONGS (over 15 years)

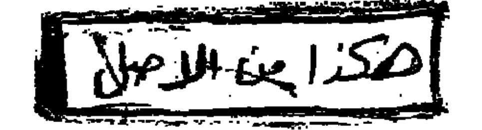
1998/99 High	Low	Stock	Price £	+/-	Int yld %	Grs red yld
139.64	116.50	Treas 8% 2013	136.5107	-0.3861	5.86	4.55
144.12	118.46	Treas 8% 2015	140.5805	-0.4919	5.69	4.52
156.98	127.39	Treas 8¾% 2017	152.2400†	-0.5651	5.75	4.54
153.21	121.52	Treas 8% 2021	149.0229	-0.5782	5.37	4.49

UNDATED

1998/99 High	Low	Stock	Price £	+/-	Int yld %	Grs red yld
79.83	55.09	War Ln 3½%	76.2769	-0.4928	4.59	.
55.17	38.48	Treas 2½%	52.8190	-0.2770	4.73	.
87.19	61.16	Consols 4%	83.9790	-0.6106	4.76	

INDEX-LINKED on projected inflation of:

1998/99 High	Low	Stock	Price £	+/-	5%	3%
205.40	194.71	Treas IL 2½% 2001	203.1610	-0.0160	2.44	2.89
207.83	192.34	Treas IL 2½% 2003	205.3109	-0.0252	2.07	2.34
134.39	124.28	Treas IL 4⅝% 2004	133.1504	+0.0094	1.92	2.04
236.65	206.54	Treas IL 2% 2006	234.8277	+0.1642	1.63	1.78
216.83	187.06	Treas IL 2½% 2009	215.1558	+0.2969	1.76	1.90
230.17	195.50	Treas IL 2½% 2011	228.2970†	+0.2481	1.85	1.95
193.59	162.40	Treas IL 2½% 2013	192.0903	+0.3523	1.80	1.87
214.49	175.38	Treas IL 2½% 2016	212.8370	+0.4827	1.86	1.94
213.93	170.21	Treas IL 2½% 2020	212.4387	+0.5406	1.87	1.90
185.97	142.88	Treas IL 2½% 2024	184.8250	+0.6067	1.82	1.88
194.75	140.65	Treas IL 4⅛% 2030	183.8088	+0.6146	1.77	1.82





NEW FILMS

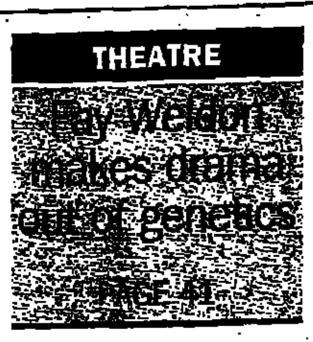
Meg Ryan finds e-mail romance with Tom Hanks

FACING PAGE

THE TIMES

ARTS

THEATRE





Unloved but unbowed

Oprah Winfrey remains defiantly proud of her film of Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, reports Martyn Palmer

The talk-show queen Oprah Winfrey's long and, at times, exhausting quest to bring Toni Morrison's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *Beloved* to the big screen has left her saddened but defiantly proud.

She has experienced at first hand, perhaps for the first time in a remarkable career, just how unpredictable the American public can be. After all, on paper, *Beloved*, which she nurtured like a baby during the 11 years since she first optioned the rights to the book, was a sure-fire winner: a script based on a powerful, critically acclaimed novel, an Oscar-winning director in Jonathan Demme at the helm, and an all-star cast, including herself, of course, and Danny Glover, an extremely bankable duo.

The result, though, was greeted with indifference in America. Winfrey herself describes the reaction to *Beloved* as "lukewarm" and "disappointing" — but she refuses to be humbled by the experience.

"From the first time I read the book I felt the birthing of it inside myself," she says. "I'm 45 years old now so I will probably not be having children of my own, but I do feel that *Beloved*, in many ways, was the child that I nurtured and carried. I don't know if I will ever act again in a movie, but if I don't, I did this one and this is the one that I wanted to do."

The novel, set in the 1870s, is part ghost story, part love story. It takes place against the backdrop of slavery and tells of its devastating effects on one family. When Winfrey, best known for her television chat show, first read Morrison's book, she immediately contacted the author and told her she wanted to turn it into a film.

"I was overwhelmed and devastated when I read the book. I had never felt the emotional connection with slavery before. I had always kind of intellectualised it. It was a time in our history, obviously difficult and terrible, but I had never felt it personally before. I wanted to put it on to the screen in such a way that people would feel how I felt when I read the book. When you read Toni's book, you understand what slavery did to a person's soul."

Bringing that vision to the screen was not easy. Over the next few years, Winfrey met several A-list directors. Many, including Jodie Foster, told her it could not be filmed; others, especially Peter Weir, were sceptical that she could play the role of Sethe, a runaway slave who suffered terrible brutality at the hands of her former owners. "When so many people tell you that you can't do it, I started to think, 'Who am I to think that I can?' There were times when I felt like giving up."

Finally, she met Demme, an Oscar winner for *Silence of the Lambs* and director of hits such as *Philadelphia* and *Something Wild*, and knew immediately that she had found her collaborator. "The first time I met Jonathan, he said, 'I love the story. I love the fact that it's a ghost story. I've never seen a script

> ‘I was devastated when I read the book. I had never felt the emotional connection with slavery before’

as good as this.' He just got it. It wasn't a story just about slavery: it's about one woman's life. By the end of the meeting we were both dancing around my living room."

During filming, Morrison was a regular visitor to the set. Demme says she gave him one very valuable piece of advice on directing Winfrey's performance, urging him to keep her in check. For her part, the emotionally fragile Winfrey was convinced, at one point, that Morrison didn't like her and took to her trailer in tears.

"Toni watched one scene and said, 'Why did you play Sethe getting angry there? Sethe doesn't get angry.' I was shattered. Immediately I thought, 'Toni Morrison hates me, she hates this movie and my life is ruined.' Her note to Jonathan that night was, 'Oprah Winfrey is emotional. Sethe is not.'

"The next day I was in my trailer crying because Toni hated me. And Jonathan came in and said, 'Look, Toni doesn't hate you, it was just a scene.' He said that a book was one thing and a movie something else. He said to me, 'I looked at that scene and I think you made the right choices.'

"But Toni was right. My biggest problem was being emotional. There were many days when Jonathan would have to calm me down. But I just wish she had said it differently."

The finished film, at just under three hours long, is uneven and left American critics divided. The paying public were not exactly lining the streets to see it.

"I think the reason why the film has not been received as well in America as I expected is because people in America are afraid of race and any discussion about race. I don't think it has anything to do with me in the role. I think for a lot of Americans the issue of race is so volatile that to bring it out front makes people embarrassed."

Born in Mississippi, Winfrey grew up, mostly with her grandmother Hattie May, determined to escape her humble beginnings. "I remember Grandma trying to teach me how to wash clothes, to kill the hogs, wring the chickens' necks, and she'd say, 'Watch me, because you're going to have to know how to do this.' And I remember thinking, 'I don't need to watch, Grandma, because my life isn't going to be like this.'"

Instead she took to heart the words of the civil rights leader the Rev Jesse Jackson when he spoke at an assembly near her home. "He said that excellence was the best deterrent to racism and excellence was the best deterrent to sexism. I went home and I wrote that on my mirror and it became my personal motto. No matter what I do, I'm going to strive to be the best, and I've maintained that for almost every aspect of my life."

At 19, she won her first broadcasting job, anchoring the local news in Nashville, and from there she moved to a bigger station in Baltimore. She impressed the bosses on a rival station so much that they offered her a chat show called *People Are Talking*. Seven years later she moved to Chicago to host a morning chat show, *AM Chicago*.

Within a year it was renamed *The Oprah Winfrey Show*. Since 1986, when it was syndicated across America, it has remained the highest rated talk show on American television. Its success has meant that she has been unable to pursue her

YORAM KAHANA/SHOOTING STAR



Oprah Winfrey: "I think the reason why the film has not been received as well as I expected is that Americans are afraid of race"

dream of becoming an actress. She has acted before, notably winning a best supporting actress Oscar nomination for her role in Steven Spielberg's *The Color Purple* in 1985, but the *Oprah* show dominates her time.

For Winfrey, this has brought incredible riches and power. She does not, however, harbour any political ambitions. "Not one. Having this big voice on television is what every politician wants. They all try and get on the show and I don't do politics on the show."

She does, however, believe that her programme has a responsibility to her 30 million or so viewers in America. While competitors such as Jerry Springer have taken the format she pioneered relentlessly downmarket, Winfrey has moved in the opposite direction. "I'm not so much saddened by the way it's going as stunned. I saw Jerry Springer the other day when a guy pulled his pants down on the air. He walks out and he says, 'This is what she wants', and he pulls his pants down and literally whipped out his penis. I couldn't believe it was happening.

"I can understand how you can get beaten in the ratings. I'm introducing books and they've got penises." She has not felt any pressure to compete with Springer. "Absolutely not. I couldn't do it. I would have to get out of television. Some programmers said that we would lose ratings — and I did for a while — but there has to be a belief which you hold on to. You do what is right and then other people will finally come to their senses. Jerry Springer started to beat us last year and people were saying to me, 'What are you going to do about it?' And I said, 'Nothing, there is nothing I can do about it.'

"I feel a great social and moral responsibility to use the show to say things that might help people to think differently about their lives. It makes their lives better — that's the whole purpose of it."

There are signs, though, that she feels it may soon be time to move on. She is involved with plans to launch an all-woman cable channel in America, a film and television production company, and she has indicated that when her current contract ends in 2002, that may be the right time to call it a day. "By that time I will be talked out."

● *Beloved opens in Britain on March 5.*

Shotgun blast from the past



■ ***THE WILD BUNCH***
Warner DVD, 1969
THE DVD format bestows terrific sound and image on Sam Peckinpah's wonderful western about ageing outlaws and their last hurrah, a true American classic. But the special boon of this release is the 33-minute documentary *The Wild Bunch: An Album in Montage*, which interlaces shots from the finished picture with behind-the-scenes footage of Peckinpah choreographing the action. Essential.

■ **FIRELIGHT**
Buena Vista, 15, 1997
AFTER conceiving a child for an English landowner in a mercenary deal, a Swiss governess in the mid-19th century hires herself as tutor to her own offspring. William Nicholson, author of *Shadowlands*, wrote and directed this pretty but fatuous costume drama in which the main characters look peeved and stunted, trapped by repressed desires. Stephen Dillane is the landowner; Sophie Marceau, that French embodiment of youth, sex and sauce, is the lass reined in by a governess's weeds. It is all very hard to believe. A rental release.

■ **LOLITA**
Fox Pathé, 18, 1997
SUBTLETY goes thataway as Adrian Lyne, director of 9½ *Weeks* and *Fatal Attraction*, turns his hand to Nabokov's novel about a college professor's obsession with pubescent girls. Jeremy Irons plays the doting prof, Humbert Humbert. Dominique Swain, from Malibu High School, is the 12-year-old nymphet, first introduced twirling a bare leg while reading a magazine by a lawn sprinkler. When Stanley Kubrick filmed the novel in 1961, he behaved chastely. Lyne opts for obvious erotic games and too many fancy camera angles. Not likely to deprave, but it might bore. Available to rent.

■ **MEN ARE NOT GODS**
Carlton, U, 1936
NOT perhaps one of the most distinguished offerings of Alexander Korda's London Films, though this romantic trifle wrapped round a stage production of *Othello* is still brimful of fascinating features. Look in awe at Gertrude Lawrence, and young Rex Harrison leaping through doors. Catch those sheep grazing in Hyde Park and the attractive score. Alas, there is also that Hollywood shrieker Miriam Hopkins as the drama-critic secretary who sets the plot in motion by falling for Sebastian Shaw's actor. But you cannot have everything.



Punch that cow: Robert Ryan in *The Wild Bunch*

■ ***THE THIEF***
Artificial Eye, 15, 1997
SEMI-COMIC Russian drama by Pavel Chukhrai about a six-year-old boy's life in the 1950s with a substitute father, a thief who poses as a soldier. Chukhrai recalls the era's hopes, injustices and survival tactics with a good mix of social observation and human drama. The dishevelled ending is unfortunate, for it stops a decent film being an outstanding one. Exemplary acting, with no cute antics from the child and plenty of roguish charm from the thief (Vladimir Mashkov).

GEOFF BROWN

Into Malick's art of darkness

NEW MOVIES: In future, all war films will be made in the shadow of *The Thin Red Line*, says **James Christopher**

After 20 years' absence the legendary film-maker Terrence Malick (see *article below right*) returns with a masterpiece about the Second World War that will influence the making of war films, perhaps for ever. He's looked at war in a way few directors have ever dared: as a piece of art.

Based on a novel by James Jones, **The Thin Red Line** charts a single bloody episode in the conflict between American troops and the Japanese for the South Pacific island of Guadalcanal. Ordered to secure a ridge, C-for-Charlie company fearfully emerges from the metal guts of a battleship, piles into landing craft and splashes through the surf on to the deserted beaches of a tropical paradise. The soldiers try to make friends with the inscrutable, Zen-like Melanesian natives. Then the glittering cast is cut to ribbons when laying siege to a lush hill defended by a Japanese machine-gun bunker.

The most striking feature of this suicidal mission is the sheer beauty with which it is shot. There are no heroes, and no orgiastic blood-soaked epiphanies. There is carnage, stupidity, waste, primal fear and squalid brutality. But most of all there is a dreamlike obsession with the natural beauty of the island that makes the film both dazzling and insane.

Malick spent $55 million and months editing an unprecedented million feet of celluloid. The result is staggering and perplexing. The plot, like war, is shattered. What fragments of narrative there are are injected into dense, rumbling, barely comprehensible voiceovers. These vary from Ben Chaplin's romantic flashbacks to his wife to Nick Nolte's savage colonel, torn between medals and thoughts of mortality. Most actors have little to cling to apart from the odd raft of speech, a rifle, and an endless chain of cigarettes. They fade in and out of focus, grimly hanging on to threads that Malick never bothers to tie. On their own, these splintered lives don't make much sense. They don't make much sense together, either. But their interior thoughts are the true landscape of the film.

Despite the narrative chaos, or even because of it, there are fantastic performances. Elias Koteas sweats despair as the captain who spearheads the mission. John Cusack leads a hair-raising assault on the bunker. Sean Penn's sergeant cynically picks up the pieces. Only Jim Caviezel's fearless, zoned-out Private Witt seems in tune with the devastation. Through his eyes we get the clearest clue of Malick's vision. By the time the company achieves its objective the soldiers have long since lost the parts of themselves that made this paradise worth taking in the first place. In one scene, a soldier smilingly reclines on a heap of dying Japanese soldiers, nursing a bag of gold teeth and a pair of pliers.

Malick hasn't in fact made a war movie at all, but a ravishing trip into the heart of darkness. John Toll's fabulous camerawork caresses huge swaths of grassland, bamboo and forest. Here the grubby mechanics of war are turned into pure art. The dizzy collage of images does not try to solve a narrative conundrum but poses one of its own: why? There is no simple answer.

In **You've Got Mail**, Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan underline why they are the most highly paid romantics in Hollywood. Their old-fashioned screen chemistry is matchless. Their last cinematic pairing, *Sleepless in Seattle*, now looks like a warm-up to this slushy comedy that neatly logs on to the Internet phenomenon.

Hanks is the shark-like manager of a giant chain of discount bookstores. Ryan is the embattled owner of a tiny children's bookshop. While they publicly badmouth each other, they unwittingly share their most intimate thoughts online. The trick of Nora Ephron's sharply written romance is that they fall in love via e-mail without revealing who they are or what they do. The irony is that they are more thrilled with their virtual romance than with each other.

Hanks continually blunders into Ryan in cafés or at publishing parties. She hates what he stands for; he can't resist baiting her. The comedy is irresistible. The romance is page-turning nonsense. The idealism about saving small bookshops gets well and truly stuffed. Being American, as President Clinton forever reminds us, is about looking forward, not backward. And if this isn't the corporate dream, 1990s Hollywood style, I don't know what is.

Ryan's resistance to her shop being put out of business by a homogenised theme park is simply a device to get up Hanks's cute nose. It works wonders on Hanks's e-mail, if not his guilt, or our credulity. Typically it's he who puts two and two together first. How he wins her round is the film's artless triumph. It's a face-off between his plump, boyish cheeks, shadowy chins and scrunched-up brow, and Ryan's blonde dishevelled bob and amazing pouting smile. The way her face crumples at the unmasking will break the stoniest heart. It broke mine.

There are no romantic frills in Jon Sanders's look at one of the great untold stories of the Wild West. In **Painted Angels** the awful business of servicing humourless, bearded frontiersmen is performed by a dour collection of immigrant women in a town so bleak it may as well be on Mars. The sex, like their lives, is joyless and mechanical. Their painted faces fail to disguise the fact that they are too young, too old or too desperate.

The camera mercilessly plods between the silent, smelly punters at the bar and the women's drab wooden cribs. The tight-lipped Madame, Brenda Fricker, runs the understaffed brothel like a Victorian parlour, complete with piano music and games for the rare visit by local bigwigs. When the girls reach the end of their shelf life they are unceremoniously dumped. "Is this the New World?" wonders Bronagh Gallagher's lost and damaged Irish prostitute, kneeling on the grave of one of her peers. It's a sad, relentless portrait of female desperation.

Titanic Town, directed by Roger Michell, is similarly stuck in the past — 1972 to be exact — and similarly depressing. Here Julie Walters excels as a foolhardy mother-of-four, determined to remove the Troubles from the streets of her Catholic estate in West Belfast. The British Army treats the place like a war zone. IRA gunmen pop in and out of people's houses like meals-on-wheels. Walters becomes a local celebrity after she turns her anti-shooting protests into a peace petition, inviting bricks through the window and her children to get bullied at school. Her droll husband, Ciaran Hinds, promptly develops an ulcer and her 16-year-old daughter, Nuala O'Neill, seeks romantic refuge with a slimy medical student. There are meetings with oily British politicians, and bumbling knees-up with the IRA. The issues are as fresh as old bones, and half as lively. It's a bravura performance by Walters, but the documentary-style film says little and solves nothing.

Perdita Durango is blessed with all the ingredients of a superb, trashy flick but criminally fails to titillate. The barely dressed Rosie Perez, all breasts and wicked-looking fingernails, is a Tex-Mex chick with a killer stare. Her romantic nemesis is a voodoo psychopath, Javier Bardem, dressed in snake-skin boots and the weirdest haircut since Kajagoogoo. Together they make beautiful mayhem — or try to. They kidnap a squeaky-clean pair of all-American teenagers — ostensibly to eat them — but end up dragging them to Las Vegas with a truckload of foetuses to sell to an unscrupulous cosmetics factory. Various scum of the earth are run over, bottled or shot. It's wild, stylish, and deeply boring.

The less said about **Urban Legend** the better. It's a shameful American campus horror flick that relies entirely on an overworked migraine-inducing orchestra for its moments of Gothic suspense. Here, various students are knocked off in the manner of contemporary urban myths as taught by the weird professor, Robert Englund. Think axeman in the back of your car. God, it brings back memories.

The Thin Red Line
Odeon Leicester Square
15, 170 mins
An extraordinary meditation on war by Terrence Malick

You've Got Mail
Warner Village West End PG, 120 mins
Bullet-proof romantic blockbuster with Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan

Painted Angels
ABC Piccadilly
15, 108 mins
Bleak period piece about women in a Wild West brothel

Titanic Town
ABC Swiss Centre
15, 102 mins
Julie Walters excels in grim review of Northern Ireland's Troubles

Perdita Durango
Virgin Haymarket
18, 122 mins
Tex-Mex psychopaths run amok in careless road movie

Urban Legend
UCI Whiteleys
18, 96 mins
Dire horror flick slashes through American campus

WEBSITE:
The Thin Red Line: www.fox.co.uk
You've Got Mail: www.youvegotmail.com
TELEVISION:
Barry Norman's Film Night, Sky Premier, Sunday 9pm, Monday 3.30pm, Wednesday 7.30pm


Nick Nolte tries to get through to some form of reality in *The Thin Red Line*, director Terrence Malick's first film in 20 years and a work of genius

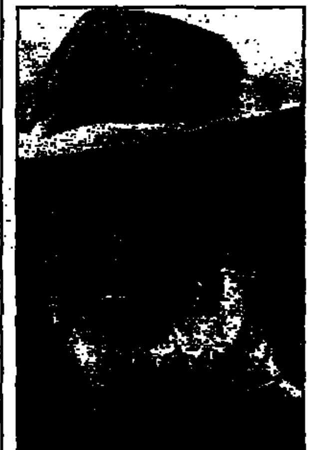
What makes Terrence Malick tick? Only he knows, and he isn't saying, writes **Lesley O'Toole**

You can look, but you can't touch

Come Oscar night, not all eyes will be on Gwyneth Paltrow's choice of designer gown. The more cerebral will be riveted by the prospect of seeing Terrence Malick, the reclusive director of *The Thin Red Line*, in person.

A director of iconic status with only two previous films under his belt (both also meandering, cerebral and largely devoid of plot), Malick shares the mythic profile of Stanley Kubrick and George Lucas. Neither, though, can compete with Malick's particular brand of mysteriousness.

In 1994 a journalist visiting a New York theatre workshop staged by Malick was issued the following edict by a publicist: "You can't speak to him, look at him, make eye contact with him. You can't even wink at him." In 1993 the *Los Angeles Times* trumpeted a Malick story with the headline "Look who we found". Old-school Hollywood journalists, meanwhile, silently mock neophytes requesting Malick interviews in connection with *The Thin Red Line* — he has not given one since 1974. He would not even allow himself to be photographed by the film's unit photographer. He did, though, supply one photo, taken by an uncredited family member.


Mythic status: Terrence Malick shuns publicity

Unfortunately for the film, none of its big names promoted the film either. John Travolta — whose role is barely more than a cameo — even refused a namecheck on the poster since *The Thin Red Line's* American release coincided with that of *A Civil Action*, for which he hoped to achieve a Best Actor nomination. Travolta failed but *The Thin Red Line* succeeded beyond anyone's wildest expectation, garnering seven Academy Award nominations including Best Picture, Best Director and Best Adapted Screenplay for Malick's adaptation of Jim Jones's novel.

Malick's whereabouts for the past 20 years are an enduring mystery. Mike Medavoy, Malick's agent in the 1970s, now heads Phoenix Pictures which raised the money and found a distributor for *The Thin Red Line*. "Terry always intended to take a year off," he says. "Soon it was two years, then four and before I knew it, a lot of time had gone by."

Not in dispute is that Malick lived between Paris and Austin, married a French woman and established an involved business and personal relationship with a pair of producers named Robert Geisler and John Roberdeau. When Malick expressed an interest in adapting *The Thin Red Line*, Geisler and Roberdeau optioned the film rights and, by all accounts, shepherded the project a considerable way towards production.

By 1995 Martin Sheen and Kevin Costner were among those at an early reading of Malick's script. Malick later met Brad Pitt, Edward Norton and Johnny Depp before deciding to cast mainly unknown actors. When Fox 2000 Pictures took up distribution after Sony Pictures dropped out, its head insisted on some star names, albeit in small roles — and the casting frenzy began.

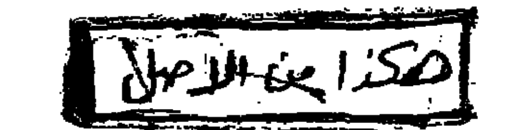
Not a single "name" who participated in early script readings was cast in the film and none has vented any frustration. Those who did vent at length were Geisler and Roberdeau in *Vanity Fair* magazine last year, claiming not only that they were banned from the film's set but that a statement was faxed to an American journalist after he visited the set calling the pair "imposters and confidence men who have no connection with Mr Malick and who have had only a distant one in the past". If the pair's account is true, their connection was not only far from distant but one made at enormous expense.

Others with cause for frustration include one of the unknown actors who, before the film's release, seemed destined for stardom. Adrien Brody's publicists went into overdrive as their client was widely hailed as the next big thing. Though Brody's role has all but vanished, he has not criticised his director. The next big thing who did emerge is 30-year-old Jim Caviezel whose role is, unequivocally, the lead. Caviezel, like a couple of other lesser-known actors whose roles are substantial — Dash Mihok and Elias Koteas — connected with Malick in a way that those actors left on the cutting-room floor may not have.

Caviezel, like Geisler and Roberdeau, was mesmerised by Malick after their first meeting and describes him in hyperbolic terms. "He is an extraordinary human being but extremely humble. He is a better man than he is a director. He's a brilliant director but he always puts other people before him. That's what I admired and want to emulate."

Dash Mihok worked every day of the shoot. "I can't explain it but we felt comfortable with each other. Our line of communication was really open, whereas a lot of other people didn't have that line. Terry didn't have as much of a grasp on their characters or themselves and they found that tough."

The film's Australian producer, Grant Hill, is not alone in insisting his boss is "really very funny and very gregarious". He even went so far as to engage in a spirited exchange of props with Steven Spielberg since *The Thin Red Line* and *Saving Private Ryan* were being filmed at the same time. What sort of exchange? "We'd send Mr Spielberg one of our infantry jackets," says Hill, "and he'd send Terry one of his Ranger jackets."



■ LISTINGS
Brendel at the Festival Hall

ARTS

■ POP
Oasis's stablemates

RECOMMENDED TODAY

Guide to arts and entertainment compiled by Marit Hargie

LONDON

THE TEMPEST: *Actors Touring Theatre*'s new production: only three actors, with Rose English as Prospero, and up-to-the-moment images and sounds. **Watermans Arts Centre** (0181-568 1176). Tonight-Sat, 7.45pm

ALBAN BERG QUARTET: Two venerable musical institutions join forces in this concert as the renowned string quartet and the illustrious pianist Alfred Brendel get together for an evening of chamber music by Mozart and Haydn. **Festival Hall** (0171-960 4242). Tonight, 7.30pm.

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM: *Pacific Northwest Ballet*'s second programme during its London visit is George Balanchine's grandly classical interpretation of Shakespeare's comic fantasy. (See review of Prog 1, right.) **Sadler's Wells** (0171-713 6000). Opens tonight, 7.30pm.

NASH ENSEMBLE: The Poulenc Centenary Series concludes on a high note with an evening including the world premiere of Meirion Bowen's arrangement of Debussy's *La Boîte à joujoux* for reciter and ensemble, with actress Zoë Wanamaker. Conductor is Diego Masson. **Wigmore Hall** (0171-935 2141). Tonight, 7.30pm.

Evelyn Glennie performs a premiere in Glasgow

ELSEWHERE

CARDIFF: Gwyn Hughes Jones makes his debut as Rodolfo in Göran Järvefelt's haunting production for **Welsh National Opera** of Puccini's *La bohème*. With Alwyn Mellor as Mimi. Graham Jackson conducts. **New Theatre** (01222 878889). Opens tonight, 7.15pm

GLASGOW: The highlight of this penultimate concert in the **Royal Scottish National Orchestra's** Discovery Series is the European premiere of Roberto Sierra's Percussion Concerto with Evelyn Glennie as soloist. Steuart Bedford conducts. **Royal Concert Hall** (0141-287 5511). Tonight, 7pm.

MANCHESTER: Nick Wilton, Brian Deacon and Edward de Souza in *Good Company's tour of* **Samuel Pepys, The Secret Diaries**: tales from Mr P's gadabout youth. Sue Pomeroy directs. **Palace** (0161-242 2503). Tonight-Sat, 7.30pm.

NEW WEST END SHOWS

Jeremy Kingston's choice of theatre showing in London

■ House full, returns only ◪ Some seats available □ Seats at all prices

□ **THE GREEN SNAKE**: Mask Studio's interpretation of Goethe's fairy tale *The Green Snake and the Beautiful Lily*, done with puppets and, of course, masks. **Riverside Studios** (0181-237 1111).

□ **VIA DOLOROSA**: Four remaining performances only of David Hare's thoughtful and poignant account of a searching visit to Israel and Palestine. **Almeida** (0171-359 4404).

□ **BARTHOLOMEW FAIR**: Laurence Boswell's jolly production of Ben Jonson's rumbustious comedy transfers from Stratford. **Young Vic** (0171-928 6363).

THE NUALAS: Irish all-girl satirical singing trio bring harmony, hilarity and a sharp look at humanity. **Drill Hall** (0171-637 8270).

□ **LIFT OFF**: Two cool guys, one black, one aching to be black, face problems after leaving school in new Roy Williams play. Indhu Rubasingham directs. **Ambassadors** (0171-565 5000).

□ **SHOCKHEADED PETER**: The Scissorman is back: wonderfully sinister show by the Cultural Industry team with the Tiger Lillies and Martyn Jacques's falsetto screech. **Lyric** (0181-741 8701/2311).

□ **DEFENDING THE CAVEMAN**: Mark Little makes his West End debut in Rob Becker's new comedy, tracing the origins of the man/woman difference back to the caves. **Apollo** (0171-494 5070)

THE RIOT: Co-production with Kneehigh Theatre of Cornwall, presenting Nick Darke's new play, set at the turn of the century: the army is brought in to quell the rivalry between two towns. **Cottesloe** (0171-452 3000).

FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE

James Christopher's choice of the latest movies

NEW RELEASES

AFFLICTION (15): Paul Schrader's bruising portrait of a frustrated cop in a small town. Nick Nolte and James Coburn put in powerful performances as father and son, caught in a cycle of male violence.

THIS YEAR'S LOVE (18): David Kane's buzzy comedy charts the mess six Camden Town misfits make of their love lives. With Kathy Burke, Jennifer Ehle, Douglas Henshall, Dougray Scott, Catherine McCormack and Ian Hart.

HOLY MAN (PG): Eddie Murphy's naive guru and Jeff Goldblum's sleazy TV executive team up to sell inferior products on a shopping channel. Ghastly stuff.

FOREIGN LAND (ICA): Strangely gripping underclass thriller about two young exiles set in Brazil and Lisbon. A triumph of quality over quantity.

NEWS FROM THE GOOD LORD (ICA). Over-the-top French comedy from Didier Le Pêcheur. Six weirdos go looking for an Author. Some surreal patches of lunacy.

CURRENT

LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL (PG): Roberto Benigni's romantic Second World War fable stitches a disturbing comedy into the Holocaust. It's supremely well acted, but the comic treatment of survival in a death camp is at best nauseous.

HIDEOUS KINKY (15): *Kate Winslet* plays a naive young mother who takes her two young daughters on the hippie trail to Morocco in the early 1970s. Beautifully shot film by Gillies MacKinnon with Saïd Taghmaoui, Bella Riza and Carrie Mullan.

SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE (15): Ripping yarn about the struggling, upstart William Shakespeare, with serious quill problems, sexual as well as inky. A cracking script by Marc Norman and Tom Stoppard. Gwyneth Paltrow excels as the Bard's cross-dressing muse. John Madden directs.

In praise of the real thing

DANCE

Pacific Northwest Ballet
Sadler's Wells

This Seattle-based troupe introduced itself to London with a "Great American Choreographers" programme. A title like that puts a lot of faith in the four men whose work it encompasses. Since one of those men is Balanchine, we know at least one of them will live up to the billing. As for the rest, though, if they truly represent Pacific Northwest Ballet's idea of "great" then American choreography is in big trouble.

Kevin O'Day's Aract, made in 1997 to celebrate the company's 25th anniversary, opens the programme. Like so much modern American ballet, it is in thrall to Balanchine, owing everything to the master's sleek abstraction of the Classical form. Yet *Aract* is a pallid and studious piece of Neo-Classical writing (set to vivid piano pieces by Graham Fitkin, played live). Flashy lifts offer some relief from the inoffensive waffle of the duets, quartets and ensemble work, but with so few distinguishing characteristics to O'Day's writing, it is no wonder the ten dancers lacked personality.

Donald Byrd's *in the courtyard* was receiving its world premiere. Set to *De Snelheid* by the Dutch composer Louis Andriessen, the work is inspired by the choreographer's "acute intellectual and emotional responses to turbulent social issues", but the piece falls short of such ambition. The pugnacity and voluptuousness suit the four dancers; but beyond that Byrd doesn't leave much of an impression.

Kent Stowell, who runs this company, contributed *Quaternary*, with music by Rachmaninov (Suite No 2 for Two Pianos). The number four is the key — four hands at the piano, four movements to the music, four men and four women on stage — and that fact, reflected in the parameters of the choreography, gives the piece a dynamic and purpose. Again, a debt to Balanchine is acknowledged in Stowell's open lines, academic gusto and splintering formations. But with so many great Balanchine ballets around, why bother making indifferent ballets in the Balanchine mould?

The programme ended with Balanchine's *The Four Temperaments*, made to reflect the changing moods of Hindemith's score for string orchestra and piano. After so much pale imitation, the real thing arrived with the force of a thunderbolt. Balanchine's brazen reshaping of Classical symmetry; his confident glee in cracking the sculpted lines of centuries of dance; his assurance of form and his boundless musical energy: all attest to his daring and imagination. Amazingly, it feels as fresh as if it were made today. What does it say about the state of American choreography in the 1990s that the most exciting thing on this bill is a ballet more than 50 years old?

DEBRA CRAINE

DEE CONWAY

Making a point: Pacific Northwest Ballet in Kent Stowell's indifferent *Quaternary*, which owes a large debt to the work of Balanchine

Let there be drums

POP

Colosseum
Croydon

MUCH has changed in the 30 years since Colosseum released their first album, and history has not been kind to the British jazz-rock they pioneered. The genre was initially welcomed as an important progression which liberated pop from the tyranny of the three-minute, three-chord song, but mainstream audiences quickly tired of jazz-rock's pretensions and eventually rejected the rambling virtuoso displays which were its stock-in-trade.

The band have clearly tried to take this on board since reforming five years ago with the "classic" line-up of leader Jon Hiseman (drums) and co-founder Dick Heckstall-Smith (saxophones), together with Dave Greenslade (keyboards), Clem Clempson (guitar), Mark Clarke (bass) and Chris Farlowe (vocals).

Their set at the Fairfield Halls on Monday featured a high proportion of numbers from their most recent album, *Bread & Circuses*, which eschews the improvisational gymnastics for a more down-to-earth, pub-rock approach.

Unfortunately, songs such as *Watching Your Every Move*, with its heavy, sub-Cream riff, and *The Playground*, a ponderous, prog-rock dirge, were so gruesomely ordinary that you quickly found yourself longing for the old, familiar excesses.

These duly arrived in the shape of *The Valentyne Suite*, which was once the band's *pièce de resistance*, but which now came across as little more than a 20-minute stretch of showboating by rote.

By far the best part of the evening was Hiseman's solo during *High Time*, a ten-minute exploration of his double-bass-drum kit that combined rhythmic ingenuity with almost superhuman strength. But, like his colleagues, Hiseman could profitably have traded most of his awesome skills for a decent song. Indeed, it was depressing to think that six musicians of this calibre could not find something better to do with themselves on a Monday night.

DAVID SINCLAIR

Creation's big bangers

3 Colours Red
Norwich

IN THE clothes business, labels often signify quality. In the record business, this is rarer but it happens. Sixties soul had Tamla and Stax; jazz has ECM. Such branding is less common in rock, but one exception is Creation Records, the home of Oasis . . . and 3 Colours Red. Until their recent hit, *Beautiful Day*, the only distinguishing feature of 3 Colours Red seemed to be that they were signed to Alan McGee's label. Now, though, they can claim appearances on *Top of the Pops* and a long stay on the Radio 1 playlist.

But if anyone in this full house at the Waterfront was hoping for a night of string-drenched ballads, they were in for a rude shock: 3 Colours Red kept their sensitive side well hidden as they scorched through a series of drum-driven anthems. Songs from their recent second album, *Revolt*, are stripped of all extras, like a new saloon gutted for stock-car racing.

Their opener, *Song on the Radio*, is a punk belch; *Paranoid People* is a Lennonesque chant, endlessly repeating its slogan like a demonstration circling a roundabout. These new tracks are mixed with old favourites which are greeted with roars of delight.

Even in their pared-down state, the songs retain some of their individual identity, albeit plundered from pop's past. One moment there are Slade-like choruses; the next there are echoes of *Def Leppard* or the Beastie Boys. When singer and bassist Pete Vuckovic strips off his shirt to reveal his sweating torso, it is hard not to think of the Stranglers.

Their set may lack subtlety, but it is not short of energy. Keith Baxter's clattering drum beats sweep all before them; the guitars of Chris McCormack and Ben Harding are dragged along in the undertow, surfacing occasionally to supply trills that snag in the brain. If 3 Colours Red were a clothes label, it would be adidas, not Armani.

JOHN STREET

■ **THEATRE**
Fay Weldon premiere

ARTS

■ **NEW CLASSICAL CDS**
Vengerov plays Brahms

Ethics and the clone rangers

The big Birmingham stage *has become* a glitzy television studio, complete with spangled background, dancing fruit to acknowledge the Banana Council's sponsorship and a slick, sneering host. *The Harry Harper Ethics Show* is going out live, and, blinking in the "hot seat", sits tonight's guest, the famous geneticist Richie Baker.

Is Fay Weldon giving us a play about the quandaries created by scientific progress or an almost more topical satire on in-yer-sool television? The answer is both, with plenty about family and gender politics thrown in, which is why the piece is a mess and thin in parts. It is a spirited, enjoyable mess, though, brimming with curiosity and moral concern. Are geneticists, as Harry alleges, doing Lucifer-like things to human embryos and DNA? How far can we push Richie's counter-argument that "every time we take an antibiotic we thwart nature's plan"?

These are grave questions, but they are, inevitably, skimpily explored. Inevitably, because they are raised on a television show that Weldon is busily exposing as vulgar and exploitative, ie, her excuse for

THEATRE



mounting a Shavian debate trivialises that debate.

Inevitably, because we cannot consider the issues disinterestedly when Michael Cashman's prosecutor is a cynical monster and David Hargreaves's defendant a dignified, likeable gent. The personalities unfairly tilt the ethical and intellectual balance. Inevitably, too, because interest shifts from Richie the prof to Richie the husband of nice, old-fashioned Alice and Richie the father of earnest feminist May, caring therapist Rowan and aggressive Rose.

They emerge from the hospitality room to answer Harry's impertinent questions about Dad and see embarrassing family scenes (a lesbian affair here, false memory syndrome there) re-enacted by their younger selves. And then, just as the first-act blackout strikes, Harry hits them with the big one. I could half-disguise this surprise by reminding you that in 1993 Weldon wrote a prescient novel called *The Cloning of Joanna May*. But I cannot be so coy. The preposterous fact is that in the 1950s, when that eminent sheep's great-great-grandparents were munching grass, Pa surreptitiously dealt with Ma's infertility in Dolly style.

"But he never brought his work home," wails Diane Fletcher's Mum before succumbing to rage, affection, forgiveness, et al. The "daughters" also veer this way and that, one getting in a dig at mankind by explaining that Carol Royle's May is "vile and violent" because Dad tried to make her a male. But suppose you and yours discovered you came from Frankenstein's lab. Could your emotions be dealt with in an act lasting some 40 minutes? It's a good fault, packing a play with material bizarre and provocative enough to sustain half a million conferences; but even Bill Alexander's admirably direct production could not stop me leaving the theatre with my head feeling like an overpopulated, overstimulated anthill.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE

DONALD COOPER

Human host: Michael Cashman with a sponsoring banana introduces television's *The Harry Harper Ethics Show* in Fay Weldon's satirical drama

Labour of laughs

SOMEONE in Plymouth has it in for new Labour in a big way. Pete Lawson's new play at the Drum Theatre gleefully rakes the Millbank muck by bringing Molière's great satire *Tartuffe* bang up to date.

Tartuffe is a scathing attack on the hypocrisy of the 17th-century clerics whose austere appearance conceals an avid thirst for wealth and power. *The Imposter* is a scathing attack on the hypocrisy of the spin-doctors, speechwriters and image consultants whose lip service to party policy masks ruthless ambition.

In the new version, Tartuffe is the spin-doctor Svengali to Orgon's politically ambitious northern businessman. He moves into Orgon's house,

The Imposter
Plymouth

propositions his wife, Elmire, tries to marry his daughter, and eventually, when he is exposed, threatens to bankrupt the lot of them. Only Tony Blair can save the day — *though, naturally, not out of* the goodness of his heart.

Let's be honest here: Tartuffe is blatantly contemporary right down to the Paul Smith suits, the housing loans and the expensive minimalist interiors. Designer Matthew Wright's well-constructed set is a corner of Bolton which is forever Notting Hill.

There is a great deal of satirical mileage in spin-speak, and the script milks it mercilessly. To the children's dismay, they are getting tough on parties, and the causes of parties. "I'll be Labour and you be Lib Dem," says Tartuffe, trying to get Elmire to give him access to her third way.

It's all pacey, knockabout fun. The cast are uniformly good, too. Andree Evans as Orgon's fearsome mother looks disturbingly like Teresa Gorman. Dermot Kerrigan plays Tartuffe with insinuatingly oily plausibility. Fred Ridgeway as Orgon is self-important enough to be convincingly taken in by his flattery. Kim Thomson makes a tantalising temptress as Elmire, and Stephanie Fayerman is comically blunt as dabbling domestic Dorine, here reborn as the People's Cleaner.

NIGEL CLIFF

Message received

Bright shirt night at the Queen Elizabeth Hall. They wore blue, purple and green: a perfect accompaniment to the bold sounds of the Britten Sinfonia, one of the liveliest chamber groups in the land. Nothing too sombre in the programme either with the exception of Beethoven's *Coriolan Overture*. This was a concert sponsored by the Post Office, with two works commissioned by BT; so immediate communication was important.

A pity, then, that the opening work, a first performance, had nothing much to communicate. This was *Conversations for Orchestra*, a BT commission by Debbie Wiseman, a composer usually found on film and TV soundtracks. The rhythms chugged; brass, woodwind and strings searched for memorable material. Wiseman seemed not to know what to do with her left arm: but then, alas, there was not much music to conduct. Afterwards Nicholas Cleobury took over, whisking his players through Richard Rodney Bennett's *Partita*, another BT commission, amiably juggling the pastoral musings and jogging rhythms of the century's mainstream English tradition. This was the work of a master craftsman.

For English music with a personal voice, however, we had to wait for David Matthews's *Burnham Wick*, an adorable piece conceived during a walk in Essex marshland. A plink from the harp summons airy strings and a corn bunting call on the clarinet. Another dose of rural nostalgia? Not quite. There is trouble afoot in Matthews's countryside. Strings launch into an impassioned, hurt elegy, and when the solo violin's skylark ascends in a nod to Vaughan Williams, it is a 999 call from an endangered species.

Throughout the evening, the

CONCERT

Britten Sinfonia
Queen Elizabeth Hall

Sinfonia's members ravished the ear with precise ensemble work and radiant solos. Indeed, in Strauss's Second Horn Concerto, it was hard to know what to admire more: the spirited accompaniment, or the glorious velvet of the soloist, David Pyatt, who rode to fame with this music in the BBC's Young Musician of the Year contest in 1988.

For all these ear-tickling delights, however, it was a relief when Beethoven's *Coriolan* and *Eighth Symphony* came along. This was music of iron and sinew, in Cleobury's hands fearsomely strong but nimble.

GEOFF BROWN

NEW CLASSICAL CDS: Early Mozart opera; a mature Brahms concerto; and wild Ives sonatas

OPERA

■ **MOZART**
Die Entführung aus dem Serail
Schäfer/Petitbon/Bostridge/Paton/Ewing/Les Arts Florissants/Christie
Erato 3984 25490-2 (2 CDs) ★★★
£31.99

ERATO's *Entführung* has the stamp of William Christie all over it. His orchestra, Les Arts Florissants, is fleet-footed, each instrument sharply defined. Christie has no time for old operatic sweats. His cast is young and alert, as it should be for this early Mozart, the voices light in texture.

Take Ian Bostridge's Belmonte. Under Christie he is almost a schoolboy, impetuous in his search for his beloved Konstanze. Years of singing lieder have taught him how to handle the German language and make each word count.

Christine Schäfer's Konstanze also proves that lieder training pays dividends in the opera house. *Ach, ich liebte* is shaped with great skill, but the soprano is a touch hard, legacy perhaps of spending too long with contemporary opera repertoire. But once into *Martern aller Arten* Schäfer is fearlessly defiant in an aria which sends many sopranos scuttling away from the role.

There is a delectable Blonde from Patricia Petitbon, while Alan Ewing turns Osmin into a more sympathetic figure than usual. A sparkling account of a piece well sprinkled with Turkish glitter.

JOHN HIGGINS

ORCHESTRAL

■ **BRAHMS**
Violin Concerto; Violin Sonata No 3
Vengerov/Chicago Symphony Orchestra/Barenboim
Teldec 0630 17144-2 ★★★
£15.99

THE booklet for this recording of Brahms's Violin Concerto includes an entertaining picture of the soloist Maxim Vengerov and conductor Daniel Barenboim arm-wrestling. It is an apt image for the traditional contest between soloist and orchestra in the Romantic concerto, though it would be untrue to suggest that this account constitutes any more of a battle royal than usual.

What it does offer is a typically intense reading by both artists: Vengerov, as ever, bursts with impetuosity and technical wizardry, Barenboim is no less forthright or engaging. The recording was made at a live concert in Chicago and Vengerov adds to the spontaneity of the occasion by contributing a partly improvised cadenza of his own.

The Vengerov/Barenboim partnership is seen in a different light in Brahms's Violin Sonata No 3. This, too, is a richly expressive performance, with an opening Allegro in which Vengerov soars high above the stave in magnificently sustained phrases.

BARRY MILLINGTON

INSTRUMENTAL

■ **IVES**
Sonatas for Violin and Piano
Schneeberger/Cholette
ECM New Series 1605 449 956-2 ★★★
£15.99

ANOTHER handsome and cryptically monochrome slipcase from the ever-unpredictable ECM New Series: this time their high-speed camera lens focuses on the music of Charles Ives. The four violin sonatas he chose to acknowledge and keep all relate cyclically to each other — and, indeed, to much of the rest of this maverick composer's own music.

In these sharp-eyed performances from the Swiss violinist Hansheinz Schneeberger (who, by the way, premiered Bartók's First Violin Concerto) and the Canadian pianist Daniel Cholette, we hear ghosts of Ives's own marches, dances and ragtimes, and echoes of other composers too. After all, according to Stravinsky, Ives "quietly set about devouring the contemporary cake before anyone else had even found a seat at the same table".

So here is Ives and his turning century: the popular gatherings of rural New England, the ambiguous joys of harvest home, the songs of summer camps. "This is not music. It makes no sense." Schneeberger and Cholette gainsay the baffled German violinist whom Ives initially and unsuccessfully tried to interest in these extraordinary works, and vindicate the composer's own unique imagination.

HILARY FINCH

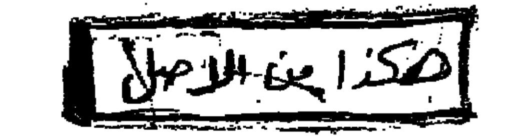
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BOOKS

What's caught in the Net

A substitute for religion or a realm of violent fantasy? **Sadie Plant** investigates cyberculture


Heaven, Hell, Purgatory and Bondai Beach: "virtual surfing" in the front room — for many, cyberspace is a recreational rather than a spiritual place

THE PEARLY GATES OF CYBERSPACE
By Margaret Wertheim
Virago, £14.99
ISBN 1 86079 527 3

MY TINY LIFE
By Julian Dibbell
Fourth Estate, £16.99
ISBN 1 84115 058 4

The swift growth of the Net has been analysed in a variety of economic, technological and political terms. Margaret Wertheim's book introduces a spiritual element to this debate: the extraordinary popularity of the Net is, she argues, a response to the "profound psychosocial vacuum" at the heart of Western culture. The medieval ability to integrate spiritual and actual space has been wiped away by modernity, and cyberspace is now allowing this dualism to reassert itself. Cyberspace, according to Wertheim, is answering our spiritual needs.

The Pearly Gates of Cyberspace deals with some fascinating material as it moves through Dante's worlds, Newton's physical space, and Einstein's relativistic space en route to the Net which, it argues, marks something of a rediscovery of Dante's Heaven, Purgatory and Hell. Wertheim focuses on the cultural and individual significance of these changing conceptions of space, demonstrating the ways in which they have informed changing experiences of reality and identity, and arguing that cyberspace will have a dramatic influence on our understanding of the world and the self.

Wertheim is on strong and interesting ground with these historical arguments. But her more detailed attempts to map the contents of cyberspace on to Dante's spaces are far less incisive. Although she takes issue with the "cyberspatial frontier rhetoric" of so many Californian Net enthusiasts, which casts the Net as an open space ripe for a new wave of colonisation and, as Wertheim writes, "hints at an ongoing cultural imperialism," her own attempt to make cyberspace a spiritual place with its own pearly gates is itself a perfect example of the colonialist attitudes she attacks. The dualistic thinking she examines and promotes makes everything depend on the separation of form and matter, the spiritual and the physical, the soul and the body — which is also to say Heaven and Hell, good and bad, right and wrong, up and down: the morality comes free with the philosophy, and it all comes free with the online world.

Such thinking may make common sense in Wertheim's California, but it is by no means obvious to everyone. Although she tries "to finish on a note that is less Christocentric, less Eurocentric, and more universal," it would take far more than her few brief references to Australian Aboriginal culture to make this anything more than a token move. And the theological tone of the book runs counter to far more than other cultural perspectives on space: cybernetics, the much neglected source of the prefix to this new space, is completely antithetical to the dualistic hierarchies beloved of the West, and digital networks are the stuff of chaotic systems and complex interconnections which make a mockery of distinctions between matter and form, and body and mind.

If Wertheim writes through a rear-view mirror which casts the Net as a new kind of spiritual home, Julian Dibbell understands it as a world in which identities, relationships, and words themselves bear little comparison to those at work in other kinds of space. He too makes a few bold references to "the basic ingredients of the human condition" but he is fascinated by the very tininess of cyberspace. And by concentrating on the details of a network composed of myriads of tiny transactions which, regardless of their contents, allow cyberspace to grow, Dibbell probably says more about the scale and complexity of the network than any attempt to view it as a whole.

My Tiny Life is an intelligent account of life in LambdaMOO, one of the first online environments to spring up on the Net. It begins with the case of "rape in cyberspace" on which Dibbell famously reported for *The Village Voice* in 1994. The sadistic manipulation of the virtual inhabitants of LambdaMOO by one of their number, a certain Mr Bungle, shattered the peace and ended the air of innocence which then surrounded such spaces. It also raised some fascinating questions about the status and significance of virtual events, the workings of power in cyberspace, and the status of conventional notions of free speech and accountability in these new spaces.

Mr Bungle's activities also prompted Dibbell to move into LambdaMOO himself. He built spaces of his own, became entangled with the complex politics, psychologies, and economies of life online, and produced this stylish fusion of fictional, historical and autobiographical accounts of his experiences in LambdaMOO.

Fusing the dot-com linguistics of the online world with the flourishes of a Victorian mystery, *My Tiny Life* is a stylish attempt to convey the striking sense of reality which can be induced by cyberspace. Dibbell narrates events in the online world as though they were more real than his real life, which is described in the typeface of LambdaMOO.

He writes with great candour about the dramatic interplay between life online and his own real life, and his accounts of both these worlds are open and perceptive: he makes no apology for the sense of delight with which he experiences all the clichés of femininity when he assumes his first female persona, and takes great care to describe the thrills of sex on the screen in their own non-genital terms.

Dibbell's account of his tiny life might be too candid and ornate for some readers, but it is a thoughtful and original attempt to deal with a world which is neither a virtual version of actual space nor a variation on some older scheme. If Wertheim's cyberspace harks back to the pre-modern world, Dibbell's tiny world is a novel space which has to be experienced in its own novel terms.

Sadie Plant's Zeros and Ones: Digital Women and the New Technoculture, *is published by Fourth Estate, priced £6.99.*

Counter-attack with the knives of language

JILL WATERS

SOLIBO MAGNIFICENT
By Patrick Chamoiseau
Granta, £9.99
ISBN 1 86207 028 8

CHILDHOOD
By Patrick Chamoiseau
Granta, £5.99
ISBN 1 86207 243 4

A small boy sits hunched in a cupboard under the stairs of a wooden house in Fort de France, Martinique. The objects of his investigation — spiders, ants and earthworms — are mercilessly probed. An old razor blade introduces a spirit of scientific inquiry to the proceedings. "He verified whether spiders and cockroaches could live without heads, or without stomachs."

Years later, the boy becomes a writer, Patrick Chamoiseau. Storytelling is his subject, and language the cradle of his identity. But this is an island where cultures and languages are layered on top of each other: the notion of a single identity is as meaningless as the attempt to treat any language as an instrument of precision.

Chamoiseau is the winner of France's Prix Goncourt for his novel, *Texaco*, also published in translation from the French and Creole by Granta. *Childhood* (translated by Carol Volk) is a slim memoir which combines with grace and exuberance the half-remembered sensations of the author's earliest years. It is intensely domestic, yet there is a kind of childlike wonder that gives his account the quality of being both rich and strange.

It is the child's delight in language which endures, and which most precisely portrays the sensation of being dominated by an outside force. The writer looks back on the boy's discovery of the supremacy of Creole and its ability to coin insults undreamt of in French.

This sense of subverting the designated, French, order of doing things becomes the theme of *Solibo Magnificent* (translated by Rose-Myriam Réjouis and Val Vinkokurov).

It's an extraordinary novel, a spiritual detective story which uses the format of a police procedural to examine the death of the oral tradition in Creole. Solibo is a storyteller who collapses in front of an appreciative Fort de France audience: when help arrives in the form of the French-trained, procedure-obsessed police, all are immediately arrested on suspicion of being implicated in what is deemed a murder.

Chamoiseau is merciless and playful in his dissection of police methods. Procedure makes no allowance for mystery. It emerges that the question the police should be asking is not who killed him but "Who is Solibo?"

It is a complex book, flitting between different perspectives and literary forms. Although translated from the French there are strands of Creole left in the original. This is not to say that the translations of both these books are not alive with the possibility of language — they are. They teach a reader that, just as it was for Solibo's audience, "It was not about understanding what was said but about being open to it, letting it carry you away".

IN SHORT

Back to the jungle

FRANKIE BOSSER COMES HOME
By Jerry Raine
Gollancz, £9.99
ISBN 0 575 06696 2

PHIL GATOR, a cross between *EastEnders'* Grant Mitchell and *Brookside's* Barry Grant, has been hiding out since he robbed a petrol station. But his smile gets wiped off his face when he gets soaked by a van the moment he returns to his suburban patch. He pays the driver back in the only language he knows — a bash on the head and a few clouts in the stomach. But the punchbag, Stanley, is the father of hardman Frankie Bosser. And when Frankie returns from his hideout for his Dad's funeral, he decides to find out what happened to his father. Jerry Raine is master of the suburban crime thriller. His prose is compelling and his insight into the mind of criminals unsparing.

Bustle buster

A CLOSE RUN THING
By Allan Mallinson
Bantam, £15.99
ISBN 0 593 04373 1

IN the latest gunshot into the field of Napoleonic fiction we meet Matthew Hervey, a dapper cornet in the 6th Light Dragoons during the last days of the Wars. From the start Allan Mallinson, a serving cavalry officer himself, takes us to the heart of the battle in Toulouse, 1814, where in the first chapter alone there is enough tightening of girths and digging of spurs to satisfy the entire turnout of an under-16s Pony Club disco. And in the first of a multipart series of adventures we are introduced to the loves and loyalties of the young Hervey. Mallinson is a fine writer with a pedantic mind and a flavour for romance who puts the story back into historical fiction.

Her, again

SCREWED
Stories About Love & Sex
Edited by Ruth Hessey and Samantha Trenoweth
Allen Unwin, £7.99
ISBN 1 86448 755 0

SCREWED is an unimpressive collection of stories and would pass by unnoticed if it weren't for the final entry by Helen Fielding, creator of the monster otherwise known as Bridget Jones. The sub-standard *More Bridget Jones* will appear in the author's soon-to-be-published book which promises continued adventures of the preposterous anti-hero. This snippet sees Jones return from a holiday and slip back into calorie-counting and lunching with her spineless friends June and Shazzer. Packed with whiney rants about slimming pills and good-for-nothing men, it is marginally less exciting than a plate of dry rice-cakes.

ALEX O'CONNELL

Marcel's eternal madeleine

JEREMY REED

PROUST
By Edmund White
Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £19.95
ISBN 0 297 84242 0

THE TRANSLATION OF MEMORIES
By P. F. Prestwich
Peter Owen, £22.50
ISBN 0 7206 1056 7

Edmund White's *Proust* is a superb model of stripped-down biography. In a succinct and constantly illuminating appraisal of the writer as homosexual, White succeeds in making public what Proust was outwardly at such pains to conceal. Proust's outsidership — he was part Jewish, gay, a semi-invalid by way of chronic asthma, and an unctuously ingratiating social climber — were all necessary facets of his person developed in the slow evolution of his genius.

White's elegant and incisive prose, evident here in his evocation of Proust's characteristically neurotic obsessions, allows us that rare opportunity of perceiving how one distinguished novelist writes about another. This is White's Proust, and so the conception is of value to literature.

If Proust's forte was to apprehend the psychological building blocks out of which the 20th century was to be constructed, then he achieved this through what he called "involuntary memory", or the unconscious. White is good on this crucial aspect of Proust, for it was the writer's facility to establish an interface between buried associations and their reappearance which was to prove the basis from which *A la recherche du temps perdu* was constructed.

White is fascinating on Proust's series of clandestine male lovers. If Marcel was adept at gender-bending for the sake of propriety in his novel — White points out that most of Marcel's female characters are "boys in drag" — then his private life was equally complex. Proust conducted an intense affair with the musician Reynaldo Hahn in the years between 1894-1896, and was to make Hahn the lifelong recipient of his gay confidences. White quotes Proust as writing to Hahn after the death of his secretary Alfred Agostinelli, to confide: "I truly loved Alfred. It's not enough to say I loved him. I adored him." And when Proust was to fall in love with a young man named Albert Nahmias, he was to go so far as to write: "If I could only change my sex, face and age and take on the looks of a young and pretty woman so that I could kiss you with all of my heart."


Proust: always an outsider

White's streamlined life of Proust is a blueprint for good biography. It is serious, vivacious, racy, and its publication is a literary event.

P. F. Prestwich's valuable insight into the friendship shared by Proust, Hahn and his cousin Marie Nordlinger is an important contribution to Proust studies. It was Marie Nordlinger who assisted Proust in his translations of John Ruskin's works, and this book benefits from a wealth of previously unpublished letters exchanged by the youthfully aesthetic trio. Hahn was to prove seminal to Proust's understanding of music as it occurs in his novel, and Nordlinger to the affinities he discovered between his own thought and that of Ruskin. Memorable in this book is Proust's reminder to Hahn: "It isn't because others have died that grief diminishes but because one dies oneself."

BOOKS

Swept away on a voyage to the Arctic

Andrea Barrett's glittering novel of polar exploration charts the treacherous waters of the human soul



Erica Wagner

You may not have been there: but — surely — you have seen photographs. The sea closed off by shifting floes of ice, the towering bergs pure, dazzling white. The sun frozen in the frame as in each exposure it moves round the sky but never sets, glittering off the thin silver leads of open water that make phantom rivers through the pack. If you travelled to those high northern places — Baffin Island, Ellesmere Island, Bylot Island, King William Land — you might believe you would know what to expect.

Zeke Voorhees has never seen such images. When, in the summer of 1855, he first catches sight of an iceberg gliding through the polar sea, he leaps from the binnacle to the rail of his ship, the *Narwhal*, his crippling seasickness cured as if by a drug. Andrea Barrett's remarkable novel, *The Voyage of the Narwhal*, opens a reader's eyes in much the same way: in choosing the past as her setting she sweeps away images and ideas that clutter the mind, and makes us see what she describes as if for the very first time. In doing so, too, she adds to our understanding that dilemmas that seem to be modern are, in truth, no such thing.

Zeke is commanding an expedition which sets sail from Massachusetts to discover the fate of Sir John Franklin, who vanished in the far north — with two ships, *Erebus* and *Terror*, and 134 men — ten years previously. Voorhees is young, reckless and possessed of "an almost farcical beauty that made women stare ... on the street and men hum with envy". In his company of disgruntled sailors and misfits is Erasmus Darwin Wells, a middle-aged naturalist whose life, until now, has been a series of disappointments and frustrations: perhaps this Arctic journey will at last bring him the glory he craves. He ships out with a duty of care, as well: his much younger sister, Lavinia, is engaged to Voorhees. It is not quite right to call Erasmus the hero of this story; heroism is not his line. Yet it is his vision, as precise and inexact as a graven image on a copper plate, which shapes the novel.

Barrett's last book, *Ship Fever*, was a collection of tales which won the American National Book Award in 1996 (it will be published here in December). The title novella finds a group of Irish immigrants arriving in Canada in 1847, in flight from the potato famine; one of their number is a young man called Ned Kynd, who reappears as the cook of the *Narwhal*. It is the reader's good luck that Barrett's fascination with this period — and this character — has spilt over into a second book. For the joy of reading *The Voyage of the Narwhal* is in finding a book whose research never overwhelms in itself: the clarity and depth of the story dazzle, but the work that must have gone into it never shows as forced or heavy-handed. From the pastry Ned makes from flour and lard, to the shapes of whales curving up through the ocean, to the way the freezing water seems to burn Erasmus when he tumbles off the ice — the details of this novel make it possible to live inside it.

Even more subtle and powerful, however, is her treatment of character. Perhaps it is, in part, the extremity of the situation of those early polar voyagers which still draws readers to their tales: forcing each one to think, how would I react? If Franklin's men resorted to cannibalism, would I be able to resist in the face of starvation? The awkward Erasmus, the dashing Zeke, thoughtful Swedish surgeon Dr Boerhaave, clever, frustrated Alexandra Copeland, companion to Lavinia back in Massachusetts: all are brought alive with tenderness and insight. Erasmus's friendship with Boerhaave develops slowly, with a kind of grave courtesy: one night they begin to share details of their personal lives; Boerhaave tells Wells he's been alone for so long it's come to seem normal: "There was a moment, then, as the murres continued pouring past them, in which anything might have been asked and answered. Erasmus might have asked what Dr Boerhaave really meant by 'alone' — with whom he shared that aloneness, and on what terms. Dr Boerhaave might have asked Erasmus what he'd done since Sarah Louise's death for love and companionship: surely Erasmus hadn't dried up completely? But the moment passed and the two shy men asked nothing further of each other."

Barrett is able to delineate, too, the quite different patterns of thought in the heads of two Inuit — called Annie and Tom by the white men — who are brought back to "civilisation" by Voorhees. If *The Voyage of the Narwhal* has a weakness, it is perhaps too neat in a way reminiscent of Dickens. Zeke is an out-and-out idiot throughout: I kept thinking, it can't be as simple as that. This makes him too clearly the villain of a work of otherwise fascinating ambiguity: that said, Zeke's ignorant wickedness keeps you turning the pages swiftly to the novel's end, a trick the Inimitable practically patented.

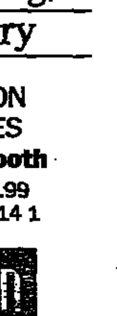
Andrea Barrett, however, has an original, memorable voice. *The Voyage of the Narwhal* is strange and rare, a journey to the unexplored lands that lie in distant latitudes and exist inside us all. Wrap up warm and come aboard.

THE VOYAGE OF THE NARWHAL
By Andrea Barrett
HarperCollins, £16.99
ISBN 0 00 225793 9

Patriots turned to rogues

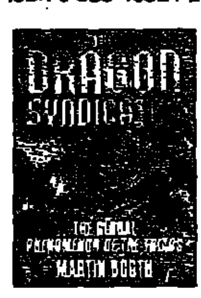
Jad Adams on the influence of the Triad gangs: in Hong Kong, crime went with the Territory

PATRICK ZACHMANN/MAGNUM



The Anti-Triad Squad raid the Volvo nightclub in Hong Kong which is believed to be used by the "Wo Shing Wo" Triad as a base for prostitution

THE DRAGON SYNDICATES
By Martin Booth
Doubleday, £17.99
ISBN 0 385 40914 1



The Triads are universally connected in the mind with criminal activity but it was not always thus. The ancestors of such fearsome villains as Broken Tooth Kui and Pockmarked Huang were chiefs who gathered their clansmen together in secret associations for self-defence under the authoritarian Zhou dynasty in the 3rd century AD.

In this popular history Martin Booth claims a direct political influence and global importance for the Triads. The case is not very well made until Booth deals with the life of Sun Yat Sen, the architect of modern China, who enlisted the support of the Triads in his nationalist campaign, thus restoring to them an air of patriotism. The payoff for the Triads was that when Sun returned from exile and sparked the nationalist revolution in 1911, regional Triad chiefs set up local administrations with themselves in key positions.

With their new-found power and freedom the Triad members quickly degenerated from pragmatic patriots into criminals: as trade and industry boomed, so did the level of bribery and protection money.

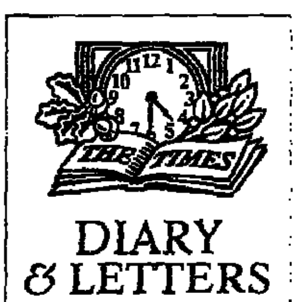
Booth claims that by 1920: "The entire fabric of Chinese government was inextricably bound up with the intrigues and machinations of the criminal underworld." This was best demonstrated in the rise of Chiang Kai-shek, whose career took off when he met the criminal overlord Big-eared Do in a brothel of which both were members.

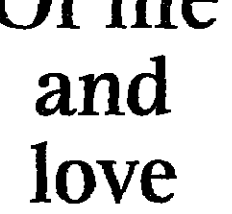
Their biggest protection racket was breaking the general strike in Shanghai in 1927, taking millions of dollars from financiers and merchants to attack the Communists in what became known as the White Terror. Many Communist men were killed in the gruesome way favoured by the Triads: castration before being chopped with swords or machetes in the "death by a thousand cuts". Within a year Chiang Kai-shek was being recognised by the Western powers as heading the legitimate Government of China.

After the Communist victory, Chiang became the darling of the free world. Chiang's gratitude was not unbounded for he began plotting to remove the British from Hong Kong with an uprising of the Triads. The result was violent Triad rioting in Hong Kong in 1956, blamed by Chiang Kai-shek on Communist agents. It was hardly a political rising: the rioters attempted to take over a bank and extorted money from factories and from motorists passing through areas they controlled. The British authorities arrested more than 10,000 Triad members over the following months.

The story indicates the weakness of Booth's approach, which claims high importance for the Triads. They were, and are, merely criminals taking advantage of political unrest to pursue their own ends.

Much more interesting is Booth's analysis of a Hong Kong in which the Triads had free rein, for there was virtually no crime of the kind which bedevils us today. Triad activity was directed towards vice, gambling, the narcotics trade and extortion. Crime against private citizens was virtually unknown: the murder rate was the lowest of any major city, mugging was unheard of and burglary uncommon. I wonder what Jack Straw would think of that?





DIARY & LETTERS

Of life and love

■ **ANOTHER instalment is due out in March of D. J. Enright's witty and ironical musings on life and letters — *Play Resumed*, a sequel to his delightful *Interplay*. Typical entries: Beryl Bainbridge's remark to him that "the ladies of the night in Frankfurt take their holidays during the Book Fair because there are now so many women in publishing". But *Play Resumed* may soon be play abandoned. As he is on OUP's books as a poet, this book appears on its already condemned poetry list.**

■ *RICHARD HOLMES was given this year's Duff Cooper Prize for his biography of Coleridge on Monday at a glittering party — literally, since it wasin the Crystal Room of the May Fair Hotel. Holmes said that once when he was giving a talk in New York, he described Coleridge's life as "a rollercoaster — like the Dow Jones index", and distinctly heard a banker in the front row whisper to his companion: "Yeah — light on futures, heavy on guilts." The novelist Malcolm Bradbury, handing him the award, said that it was almost as grand to be invited to be a presenter as to win the prize — the line of notables that had done the job started with no less than Winston Churchill.*

■ MICHAEL NAUMANN, the German Minister for Culture, has been complaining that the British are obsessed with the war. He will smile to learn that in April there is yet another book coming on Rudolf Hess's dramatic flight to Scotland in May 1941: *Hess: The British Conspiracy* by John Harris and M. J. Trow (Deutsch). The authors introduce a fascinating new character into the story — an old Scotswoman called Mary Roberts. She knew some German friends of Hess, and the new theory is that this innocent old dear was used by an intelligence unit to write some letters to them that would tempt Hess to come here with the hope of making peace with Britain. But Churchill would have none of it, and Hess spent the rest of his life in jail.

■ **LIZ CALDER, co-founder of Bloomsbury, has simply decided to take life easier, *whatever the gossip-ridden* world of publishing may say. *Her decision to slow down* was made a year ago and *discussed with Nigel* Newton, her fellow founder. *Just to set those rumours to* rest.**

■ ***e-mail us at:***
books@the-times.co.uk

IN metro THIS SATURDAY
High rise: novelist Andrew O'Hagan on his journey from a Glasgow tenement to a Soho club

Still Daddy's girl but her own woman, too



Frieda Hughes: poetic echo

Last month a tall, confident woman, statuesque in a dark gown, stepped out on a stage andaccepted the Whitbread Book of the Year Award on behalf of her father. A murmur rippled through the crowd. "How like her mother she looks," people said of Frieda Hughes.

Her parents may both be dead, but Hughes cannot escape their legacy. For many she is the tiny daughter outside whose door Sylvia Plath placed bread and milk before going downstairs to lay her head in the gas oven. For others she is the "Little Frieda" of Ted Hughes's poem. Now in her 30s, an established painter and writer of children's books, her debut collection of poems, ***Wooroloo*** (Bloodaxe, £6.95; ISBN 1 85224 496 8), will undoubtedly be seized on and scoured for the imprint of her parents' imaginations.

There is much to be found. These poems are haunted. Her father's thought-fox skulks through the work, leaving its sharp stink behind; her mother's angry, unsparing tone sculpts a stark mental landscape. Often, resonances are so strikingly clear that it would be insulting to suggest they were not deliberate, that Frieda Hughes is not determinedly facing up to her parents' bitter fame in the most direct way she can. Even the poignant dedication — "For Daddy with love" — echoes Plath's poem, *Daddy*.

But the publication of *Wooroloo* marks the watershed which any child of any famous parent must reach with emotional maturity. After years of resistance, Frieda Hughes publicly faces the fact that she is her parents' daughter. "Tiger is born of tiger./ Looks like tiger. Eats the same meat./ Does not complain about its stripes," she declares defiantly. The blunt lines stub, one against the other, neither lyrical nor particularly cadent, but packed with feeling.

At the heart of these poems is an idiosyncratic voice which belongs to Frieda alone. It sings like a scar. Wrenched out of a long muteness, it jars like the harsh laughter of the kookaburra in Wooroloo, the place in Australia where Frieda finally came to terms with her past, where she let her "wild oats pale as peroxide lie down among/ The bottle brushes" and acknowledged the "seeds awaiting./ Stiff little spiked children wanting water".

It is an anguished, visceral voice. Hughes lashes out against vulpine readers who appropriate her mother's death for their own ends, who "turned her over like meat on coals/ To find the secrets of her withered thighs/ And shrunken breasts". Unflinching she confronts uncomfortable facts from the flyblown stench of a dead cow, to the aridity of a hysterectomy: "My disease will be stripped out/ Like the rotten lining of leather coat,/ And, neatly sewn, I will end here."

Frieda Hughes realises that she is unpractised as a poet. In the final work of *Wooroloo* she writes: "Stuck in rock/ My sentences are the roadside crosses./ Language got small here. Syllables and consonants fell off the plate/ Like too many peas." Her point is proven. Metaphors pile up, one sapping the strength of the other.

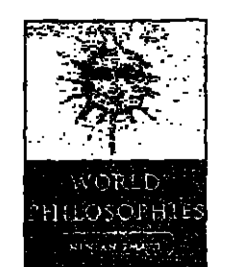
At her best Hughes brings a painterly vision to her poems. Her canvases are studies of darkness and brilliance, filled with fiery imagery. She should let this voice blaze, stripping away imitation, withering uncertainties. It is from her free, wildfire imagination that readers will look forward to hearing in the future.

RACHEL CAMPBELL-JOHNSTON

New manifesto: thinkers of the world, unite

KAREN ARMSTRONG

WORLD PHILOSOPHIES
By Ninian Smart
Routledge, £25
ISBN 0 415 18466 5



Human beings are meaning-seeking creatures. While dogs — as far as we know — seem to feel no need to reflect on the canine condition or to engage with problems of injustice or morality, men and women feel compelled to do so. We are beings who fall easily into despair, and our religions, philosophies and works of art help us to give our existence substance and significance.

But these philosophies are fragile and, because they are so often associated with individual or cultural identity, people feel vulnerable and defensive if they are attacked. This has been especially problematic in our shrinking world, where the prevalence of Western science and technology has often gone hand in hand with Western philosophical hegemony. Other systems of thought are all too often either ignored or derided.

Ninian Smart has attempted to redress this imbalance. *World Philosophies* delineates many of the major philosophical and religious trends in various parts of the world: South Asian, Japanese, Islamic and Jewish philosophies are summarised lucidly alongside the traditions of the West. To understand other people's habits of thought is, he believes, essential if we are to avoid cultural chauvinism.

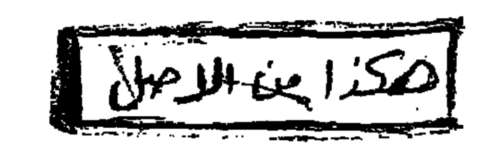
As a work of reference, this will be invaluable. Smart's analysis of such crucial thinkers as Buddha, Confucius, Descartes and Derrida is impeccable. It is, however, perhaps inevitably, dense and somewhat indigestible. His approach is atomistic, and the ideas, as he describes them, often lack the imaginative ambiance that makes them compelling.

This abstraction is probably inherent in the subject matter. As Smart explains, philosophy has to put some distance between itself and the chaotic nature of human experience, in order to impose a system. Essentially, our philosophies are fictions. When cut down to bare bones they tend to seem even more arbitrary and unlikely than in the original. The most abstruse philosophies often sprang from concrete problems. Buddhist and Muslim philosophy, like Greek rationalism, evolved in the market-place and were, in part, a response to the injustices of a cut-throat economy. Smart tends to ignore this dimension.

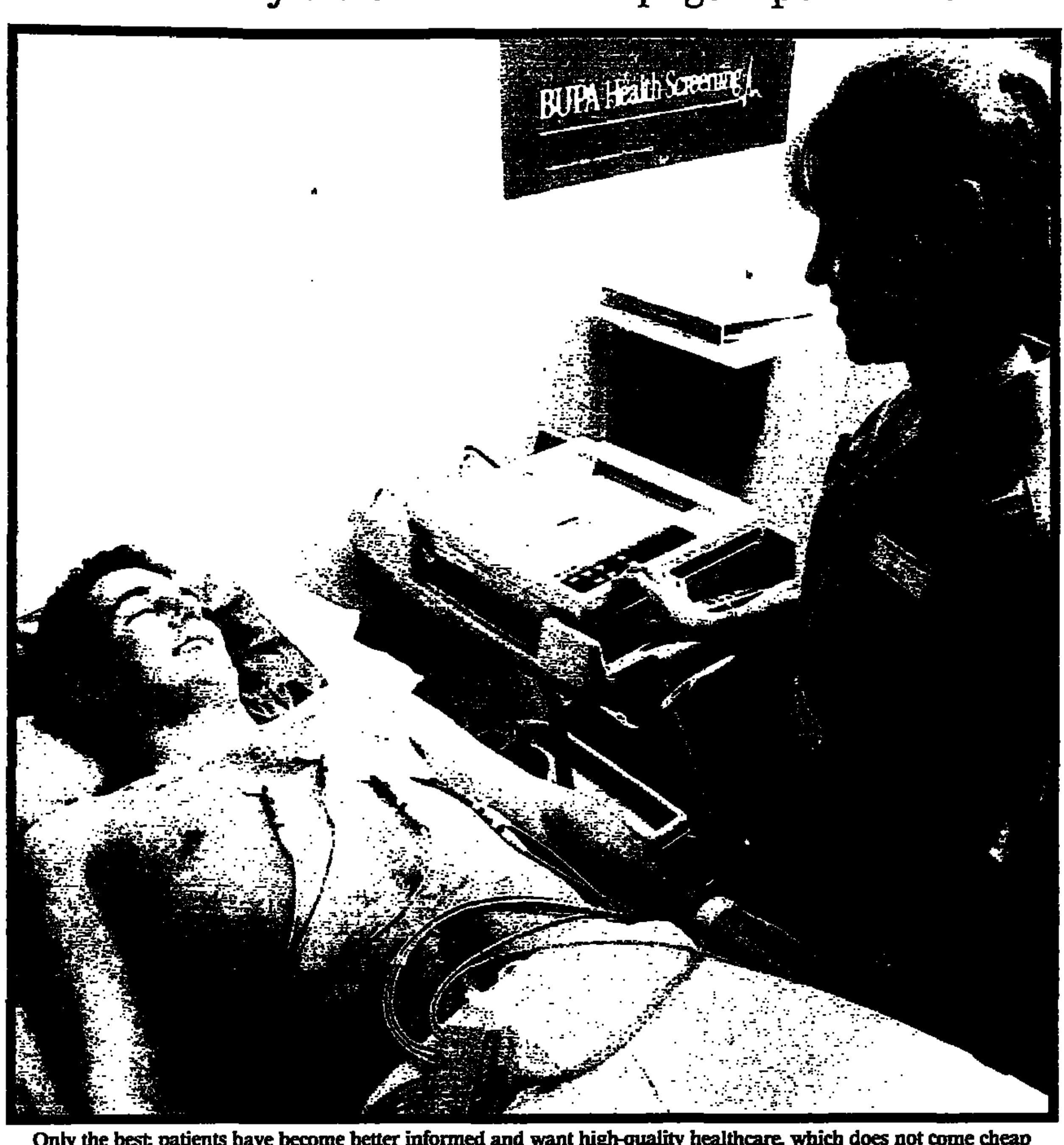
Thus he discusses the mystical cosmology of the 16th-century Jewish Kabbalists, which imagines an exile in the heart of the Godhead, without mentioning the tragic expulsion of the Jews from Spain and from other cities and districts of Europe. To miss out the context from which a philosophy springs is to omit its essential drama and pathos, and fails to show why some of the most unlikely ideas take root.

Nevertheless, the book should encourage Western readers to look beyond their own traditions. The Black Theology of Africa or the Liberation Theology of Latin America both challenge establishment Christianity in the West. Buddhist conceptions of the self offer an instructive critique of occidental systems and, perhaps, explain why we find it difficult to "feel" the philosophy of Kant.

Smart suggestively directs his readers to these comparisons and thus invites them to begin a dialogue with other traditions: this is the chief merit of his book. As he concludes, at a time when tribal and cultural chauvinism appears to be on the increase, we need to develop a vision of history that will enable people of different cultures to enter imaginatively into each other's pasts in the hope of living together more successfully in the future.



Ian Murray introduces a three-page report on how the private sector is coping with a changing health industry



Only the best: patients have become better informed and want high-quality healthcare, which does not come cheap

Pain and gain as the market shifts

Private healthcare is going through an expensive sea change, forced upon it by a complicated combination of political, technological and demographic factors.

Networks of state-of-the-art hospitals, where major operations can be performed, are emerging, a far cry from the cosy clinics for minor procedures that were the mainstay of private health insurance a few years ago.

The political drive for change derives from the Government's double standard on the National Health Service. On the one hand, Labour is ideologically opposed to private healthcare — no one more so than Frank Dobson, the Health Secretary. That opposition resulted in the decision to end tax relief on private healthcare insurance premiums.

At the same time, the Government's waiting-list initiative is persuading many patients who need serious operations to opt for private care. In order to reduce the numbers on their lists to meet their targets, hospitals are tending to concentrate on minor procedures such as hernia, varicose vein and cataract operations, for which patients often used to wait a year or more. Patients needing major operations such as heart bypasses or hip replacements are therefore having to wait for so long in discomfort that they turn to private care.

The result is that 20 per cent of heart operations and 30 per cent of hip replacements are now done privately. If the 500,000 operations carried out in the private sector had to be done within the NHS, the Government's waiting list initiative would probably collapse.

The need to carry out so many major operations is driving the technological revolution in the sector. Cancer treatment, heart and orthopaedic surgery are all but impossible in small units and require the latest equipment backed by a large staff.

> A family will buy an elderly relative an operation as a gift

This has led to "networking" — a system by which the big insurers exclusively use a network of hospitals that they have vetted for cost and quality. This has been spearheaded by PPP, which has caused widespread resentment, especially in the charity sector, by excluding many hospitals with long and honourable traditions of care.

Britain's ageing population is another factor forcing change. Cancer, heart disease and worn joints are all more common in old age, which means that more and more members are making claims, increasing the expenses to be met from membership income.

The price of new drugs and technologies has been rising far faster than inflation. The modern patient is well-informed and wants the best, and insurers are having to pay for it.

Membership is at best static, covering about 12 per cent of the population, but claims are increasing, especially for the more expensive procedures. A hip replacement costs about £6,000, a heart bypass between £11,000 and £12,000, and cancer treatment up to £30,000.

Paying for this is proving ever more expensive to the private insurers, even though they have raised subscriptions by up to three times the rate of inflation and held down fees to surgeons and hospitals by less than inflation.

The end of tax relief and the growing cost of subscriptions have made people increasingly reluctant to insure themselves. The sort of person who was once prepared to pay for the peace of mind that a health insurance policy can bring is now prepared to rely on the NHS for "basic maintenance" and to buy private treatment only in an emergency.

A few people regularly set aside and invest the cost of health insurance, earning extra income from this personal "fund" which is then available if necessary. More, however, join one of the growing number of self-pay schemes run by insurers and hospital groups such as the Nuffield, with cheap or free credit terms that allow patients to repay the cost in instalments. These schemes are especially attractive to people who want operations not normally covered by insurance or provided by the NHS, such as cosmetic surgery and IVF, for which the market is constantly growing.

Families are also using self-pay schemes to buy operations, sometimes as birthday or Christmas presents, for elderly relatives who cannot afford a hip replacement or cataract operation and are doomed to months of pain or incapacity if they have to wait for the NHS.

There has been a 20 per cent increase in the self-pay sector during the past year, and it now amounts to more than 10 per cent of all private healthcare — reversing the trend of the Eighties, when the proportion of insured patients grew while the number paying for themselves fell.

The one area where membership is holding up is the corporate sector, with companies calculating that it is cheaper to subsidise insurance for key staff than to risk them being off sick for long periods awaiting NHS care.

Despite the Government's antipathy to private care, which may even lead to a clampdown on the NHS contracts of surgeons, working part-time in the sector, it remains an essential element in keeping the nation healthy.

It provides some of the best treatment in the world for those who can afford it, and relieves pressures which would make the NHS a far worse service for those who cannot afford it.

Pick and choose: it depends on the bank balance

The insurance companies are having to design cover for a variety of pockets, **Pat Blair** reports

Health insurance is seen by many as a worthwhile perk of their job, allowing them more choice about when to have treatment, where and by whom. Employees in company schemes make up the majority of those insured, although, at 30 per cent, individual subscribers account for a substantial part of the market.

For consumers, the choice can be bewildering. There are now almost 30 provident organisations and commercial companies selling private medical insurance in a plethora of packages tailored to meet corporate or individual needs. The market, worth around £2 billion in premiums, is dominated by BUPA and Private Patients Plan (PPP), which have respectively around 40 per cent and 30 per cent. Norwich Union Healthcare sits in third place, with about 9 per cent.

An alternative to the insurance route is offered by Nuffield Hospitals, which has 38 hospitals and a centre for the care of the elderly. Its Nuffield Hospitals Direct scheme, launched last year, offers a fixed price for all treatment, and has a personal medical loans scheme.

There are also healthcare cash plans, with HSA Healthcare among the leaders of this part of the sector. Cash plans aim to be complementary to private medical insurance, meeting the needs of those seeking to finance short-term medical problems, such as dental treatment, while private medical insurance (PMI) will continue to be used to pay for long-term medical conditions.

Insurance packages have almost infinite variety, which makes comparison between companies more difficult. Generally, the more that is paid in premiums, the greater the range of benefit. Day surgery and inpatient treatment costs are almost always covered but, depending on the package, outpatient consultations may not be included. There may be limitations on which hospitals may be used.

Some packages will cover only common conditions; others may be extended to include dental cover, or alternative therapies such as acupuncture. Certain treatments, such as IVF, may be excluded and there are likely to be limits placed on people with pre-existing medical conditions. Insurers may require prior authorisation, with the consumer first checking that their insurance covers the particular treatment, or individual doctor or hospital.

Benefits may also be paid in cash, as a lump sum on diagnosis of a specified critical illness, for example, or as an allowance if the patient opts for NHS treatment. Some packages offer private hospital treatment if the procedure cannot be done on the NHS within a specified time.



Some hospitals offer a fixed price for all treatment

Many such developments stemmed from 1990 when insurers, who were paying out an unsustainable 90 per cent of their income in benefits, were faced with the choice of a large increase in rates, or designing packages for a variety of pockets.

Todayinsurers are paying out in benefit around 87 per cent of their premium income. Yet, partly because the market is static, consumers are unlikely to see large rises in premiums, according to Brian Reilly, general manager, BUPA personal sector sales. Instead, insurers will be aiming to cut their operational costs by streamlining their structure.

One type of cover still in its infancy is long-term care insurance. To date, only about 30,000 people have adopted it. It remains to be seen whether it will be given a boost by the forthcoming report of the Royal Commission on Long-term Care of the Elderly.

Long-term care insurance pays benefits for care in three broad areas: in a nursing home; in a residential home; or for help in one's own home. Payouts are triggered if the insured person has a cognitive disorder such as Alzheimer's disease and needs special care, or if he or she cannot perform certain "activities of daily living" (ADLs). These include such things as bathing, washing, feeding or dressing oneself. Normally a person must be unable to perform at least two, sometimes three, ADLs before receiving benefit, although walking aids and such like may be provided earlier.

"Levels of awareness have increased over the past 18 months or so," says Hywel Jones, Norwich Union's marketing manager of long-term care.

So far, there have been few insurance moves into primary care services. However, for £10 a month or £120 annually, Norwich Union offers up to four GP consultations a year at its Medicentres, where minor surgery can be undertaken, and a 24-hour helpline. Day or night house calls, for those who live within 20 miles of a centre, cost £45 a visit.

PPP is piloting a scheme involving GPs, "to make independent general practice a realistic and affordable choice for patients and doctors". The scheme has its critics. If implemented nationwide, however, it would take insurance cover to the heart of health services organisation — primary care — in a way that has not been done since the inception of the NHS.



GEOFF TOMKINSON/SCIENCE PHOTO LIBRARY



A patient is prepared for a brain scan using a magnetic resonance imaging scanner. It is claimed that MRI could cut the cost of diagnosis

Miracle of magnetism

Diagnostic technology may help hospital budgets, says **John Stansell**

Advanced medical diagnostic technology could save the NHS millions of *pounds each year — if* medical practitioners would use it more, says the managing director of a leading private healthcare firm. While the Government is pouring extra funds *into increasing* the numbers of hospital beds and trying to attract back trained staff, such as nurses who are no longer with the NHS, many of its older and more traditional *senior people* are ignoring what technology could do to help them to cut costs.

The executive cites the ability to use magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) *scanners for diagnosing* a range of conditions from cancers to muscular, skeletal, neurology, ENT (ear, nose and throat) and gynaecological complaints. In *many instances, he says, consultants* opt for older, often traditional techniques, such as surgery or X-rays and only turn to MRI when they fail. The success rate of MRI, *however, is so much higher that it* would seem logical to try it first. It is also non-invasive and has no known side-effects.

There is a catch, of course. The *first is that it is a relatively new* approach to diagnostic medicine. The second is that it costs more per session than the other methods. But overall, the executive claims, it is more cost-effective than the traditional methods, if you include the time spent, the longer a patient *needs to occupy a bed and the need* to involve other people such as surgeons, anaesthetists and nurses.

The problems of cost and tradition are hard to overcome in a *health service now under huge pressure* to cut costs. But, says the executive, "clinical practices have to change" if the NHS is to meet its long-term targets at an affordable *cost to the nation. One way that* could happen is for more firms to buy and operate the expensive new systems on behalf of the NHS.

His firm does just that. He has *ten fixed MRI units in hospitals in* his region and four mobile units that serve emergency or unexpected demands. His company also runs specialist cardiovascular labo*ratories in many of those hospitals* and provides other services.

There are four principal English suppliers for services such as MRI scanners and cardiovascular labo*ratories to NHS Trusts and hospitals*: Westminster Healthcare is probably the largest, followed by Lister Health in Yorkshire, Health South in Guildford and Lodestone in suburban London. There are smaller providers who have done deals with local trusts or hospitals.

The key to their success is the technology, coupled with specialist medical staff who can use it to the full. Major manufacturers of MRI scanners, such as Philips and Sie*mens, are adding new applications,* building on the success of the equipment in providing non-invasive and non-toxic investigation of people's bodies. For example, doctors *can use the technology to assess* whether a baby in the womb is in the appropriate position for delivery, without posing a risk to either the mother or her child.

They are also capable of helping clinicians to detect breast cancers and other similar problems, but *budgetary restraints with the NHS* make this unlikely. Firms such as his, which own the equipment and hire specially trained medical staff to use them within NHS hospitals, *could deliver such services at an* overall cost saving.

Although MRI is making inroads into the cardiovascular field, X-ray machines still dominate, mainly for cost reasons. Trevor Thomas, of Lister Healthcare in Yorkshire, says that they are currently used by many health professionals to look at arteries, veins and heart valves of people believed to be suffering from cardiovascular problems.

MRI's versatility could do better, *often at lower overall cost and with* fewer side-effects in many diagnostic tasks, if NHS managers could be persuaded of its cost-effectiveness. For example, Mr Thomas *says, doctors today tend to use fibre* optical arthroscopes to examine people with knee-joint problems. They must penetrate the skin, insert an optical fibre and manipu*late it remotely while studying the* image on a screen. They need anaesthetists and other surgical staff and the patient is subject to considerable discomfort and will probably *need a bed for one or more nights.*

By contrast, MRI can provide more information, faster, with fewer staff and less pain for the patient. Also it can be done on a day-care *basis which cuts costs.*

Younger doctors opt for these methods, but are often overridden by senior clinical staff or managers who believe that traditional meth*ods are cheaper. It is a struggle to* get people to change their practices, Mr Thomas says. But if the NHS is to give better value for money, they must be persuaded.

Firms invest in a healthy workforce

Treating early signs of illness helps to ensure that staff are fit for the job

Everybody knows that prevention is better than cure, but few people act on this maxim. Private health firms, though, are doing just that.

Last November, a team of medical and social affairs experts — led by Sir Donald Acheson (a former Government Chief Medical Officer) — produced a report which stated that the growing wealth divide in advanced *nations meant that* better-off people were increasingly healthier than the poor. The report offered a prescription for this problem based on redistribution of wealth.

Why are private health firms interested in this issue? From giants in private medical insurance and services such as BUPA to small companies offering high-tech diagnostic and analysis services, those in the private health field now recognise the scope for both new revenue and savings on current expenditure through adopting techniques that could help to prevent key personnel in industry from becoming *ill in the first place.*

Chris Jessop, managing director of Barbican Health Care, says that his firm's business is founded on providing assessment services to firms which earn their keep by early detection of signs that key employees are prone to problems that may affect future performance. He cites the fact that although many City high-flyers seem to cope well with the mental stress of their jobs, physiological problems, such as *skin rashes, digestive ailments* and, in women, hormone imbalances and irregular menstrual cycles, suggest otherwise.

Barbican Health Care offers a *range of clinical, pathological,* physiological and psychological assessments which add up to an overall picture of a client. "Our approach is holistic," Mr Jessop says. *"The bottom line is that when we* ask the question 'Has it changed your lifestyle?' we expect to get the answer 'yes'."



Fit for work: firms now spend more on ensuring staff feel good

In addition to private GPs, den*tists and other specialists,* Jessop's firm provides advanced laboratory facilities that are geared to producing an accurate picture of the health of key individuals working *for various companies. These are* backed by specialist software analysis programs that can give health professionals deeper insights into the people being studied.

In the more conventional private medical insurance sector, companies such as BUPA are increasingly preoccupied with health management programmes in the workplace. Val Gooding, chief *executive officer of BUPA, lists the* aims as "preventing illness, improving the health of employees, reducing sickness absence and increasing productivity".

To achieve these goals it is attempting to identify risk factors. It also provides telephone helplines and is sharing expensive diagnostic and screening hardware *and software with other private* institutions and NHS hospitals. BUPA has produced a comprehensive publication titled *Help yourself to better health — Your personal health guide.* It covers key lifestyle issues which could have a bearing on an individual's ability to get the most out of life — now and in the future.

In addition, specialist companies offering diagnostic and screening services — manning costly diagnostic systems such as MRI scanners for NHS Trusts — have discovered there is a burgeoning de*mand for these machines to help to* detect common destructive ailments such as blood pressure and high cholesterol levels.

Lister Healthcare, based in *Selby, Yorkshire, now gets more* frequent requests to make greater use of its MRI scanners (both fixed and mobile) and its X-ray-based cardiovascular diagnostic systems to screen individuals in an effort to assess how well-equipped they are for their jobs. Trevor Thomas, the firm's managing director, says a leading carmaker is using the MRI scanners to gauge the state of their employees' backs. There are obvious benefits for firms which employ workers to carry out heavy physical tasks while endeavouring to avoid any financial liabilities that might arise through workplace injuries.

JOHN STANSELL

Now is the time to plan for the twilight years

Funding of care of the elderly must be addressed by State and individual, writes **Pat Blair**

When the final report of the Royal Commission on Long-term Care on the Elderly is published next week, the public debate about what sort of provision and how it will be funded will just be beginning.

For some time there have been rumblings about the cost of looking after an increasingly long-lived population and whether the State could afford the necessary range and quality of care. Until about two years ago, there was a boom in privately-run residential and nursing homes. Largely, this merely compensated for a reduction — by almost half — in publicly funded long-stay places. This boom has now halted.

People are now living longer and stay healthier for longer. And surveys show that, given the choice, most people prefer to be assisted in their own homes for as long as possible. When they do need to enter full-time care, therefore, they are likely to need more attention than was previously the case.

This has contributed some uncertainty over what to provide. BUPA, one of the largest operators of long-stay homes, pointed out in its submission to the Royal Commission: "There is not enough statistical data to predict the need for care in the first half of the next century accurately. Population projections and the demographic shift suggest at least a 20 per cent increase in people requiring care at all levels and, most significantly, a 68 per cent increase in those needing long-term nursing care." The data, says BUPA, pointed to a need for social care in the retired population but that the provision of long-term nursing care was "of greater relevance over the age of 80".

With people staying in their own homes for much longer, their stay in full-time care is likely to be shorter than in the past. This adds to the difficulty of predicting future requirements and is perhaps one reason why, over the past two years, there have been amalgamations and takeovers among companies providing long-term care. BUPA, which with 5,000 places in 270 homes is now the largest single operator, acquired six companies or divisions of companies — including Care First, Goldsborough and Takare Homes Ltd.

Figures from the independent health care analysts Laing & Buisson show that at April last year, there were 561,600 long-stay places in Britain, a drop of 9,000 places over the previous year, in a market worth £8.4 billion annually. Its report, *Laing's Healthcare Market Review 1998-99*, notes: "This is the second annual decrease in succession and the fifth year in succession in which overall capacity growth has been below what would be expected from demographic pressure."

However, the greater question is how all long-term care will be funded. As Norwich Union says in its submission to the Royal Commission, the annual cost of living in residential care where there is little or no nursing care is, on average, £12,500, "compared with the £17,500 average cost of nursing care".

Leaks from the Royal Commission suggest that one approach would be to separate accommodation and nursing costs. The latter would be paid by the State, while individuals would contribute towards accommodation costs. This is unlikely to find favour in Government: the cost to the State is estimated at £1 billion in the first year, rising to £7 billion by the middle of the century.

Moreover, it would not stop people having to sell the family home. Those with assets over, say, £40,000 — up from the present £16,000 — would still have to pay towards their upkeep. Brian Reilly, the general manager of BUPA personal sector sales, believes that some form of insurance provision is the way forward.

He says that, had they been re-elected in 1997, the Conservatives were ready to announce a partnership scheme under which the Government would match an individual's payment into long-term care provision.

What seems certain is that nobody can bank on the State looking after them in their twilight years — and that now is the time to plan for the future.

TONY STONE IMAGES

Golden years: how best can we secure our futures?

Dentists feel they are the Cinderellas of the medical profession, says **John Stansell**

Our teeth need more than a drill and fill



Open wide: but today patients are more often required to open their wallets to pay for costly dental treatment

Dentists are more unpopular than ever and it has nothing to do with whining drills or jaw-clenching stabs of pain. The reason is that they are increasingly striking patients off their NHS lists.

According to the British Dental Association (BDA) 25 million people — 45 per cent of the population — are not registered as NHS patients with a dentist. In many areas, such as in the Home Counties and other regions of apparent high incomes, few dentists will take new NHS patients.

For many going private is often the only option, but that may seem unreasonable to taxpayers who argue that because they pay for the health service they should be treated by it.

You might believe that dentists are so well paid that their reluctance to treat people on the NHS is no more than simple greed. The average dentist earns just under £47,000 gross, according to the BDA, after the expenses of their practice.

Dentists generally argue that the fee paid to them by the State for treating patients on the NHS (£1.16 with the patient contributing £4.64) is barely enough to cover routine check-ups, let alone cleaning or any extensive treatment.

They have been frustrated over a long period by government failure to make decisions about reorganising the profession to account for current demand or modern ways of meeting it.

The result is that NHS patients are required to pay up to 80 per cent of the costs of any treatment, up to a total of £340 a time, unless exempt by age, pregnancy or in receipt of benefits. Any patients who need more than one treatment in a year can typically pay about £400. If they join a dental insurance scheme and pay between £10 and £15 a month, depending on the state of their teeth at the start, that covers them for all check-ups and treatment.

So why doesn't everyone go private? One argument is that if you are in late middle age or are elderly, the premiums could be much higher. The key point is that the profession and its NHS fee structure are still funded in the belief that the dentist's role is to "drill and fill".

Originally it was assumed dentists would check teeth, clean and polish, and subsequently fill any cavities. But today there are many more dental diseases and problems than cavities, and many more treatments than fillings. All cost more money than the NHS is prepared to pay. Dentists must therefore charge patients a part of the total cost.

Many NHS-approved treatments are traditional, often not as good as modern techniques, and involve dentists in significant bureaucratic procedures to account for the payments. Most dentists want to do the best job they can, and so it hurts their professional pride as well as their pockets to offer a treatment that is, if not second-rate, not the best.

For example, a traditional amalgam filling is a third of the cost of a tooth-coloured one using modern composites. Concern about the risks of the mercury-based silver coloured amalgam is growing and has prompted the Department of Health to advise pregnant mothers not to have fillings with this material.

Nigel Carter, the chief executive of the British Dental Health Foundation, says that although nothing has been proved there are suggestions that the mercury in amalgam could contribute to a range of diseases such as multiple sclerosis and ME. "No food and drug administration in the world would approve amalgam for use if was introduced today," he says.

Mr Carter says that it is up to the Government to solve the problem. It is unwilling to withdraw NHS support for ordinary people, he says, but will not pay the real costs. He argues that a better approach would be to make check-ups free and treatments chargeable. Others, including the BDA, favour a more effective mixture of private and public funding involving both insurance schemes and government funding.

Whatever stance you take, you cannot get away from the fact that dentistry is in crisis. The Conservatives, says the BDA, cut dental school places by 10 per cent in 1987 so that now, and for the foreseeable future, there are many more patients than the number of qualified dentists can treat, whether in public or private practice.

A report earlier this week on *You and Yours*, the BBC radio consumer programme, said that people are increasingly turning to doctors with dental problems because they are "free".

The debate does not include the preventive treatments that dentists could apply. For example, simple filling of small fissures in children's teeth could prevent more serious cavities later on, but it can't be funded. There are new bonding techniques that mean dentists can remove less of the natural tooth before filling or crowning, but they are too costly.

Although the BDA asked for £50 million a year for three years, this Government allocated £19 million of new money in September 1997 for establishing NHS practices in areas where there are none, or to expand existing ones, but only £7 million has been spent so far.

Dentists, who must train longer than most graduates and therefore expect to be better paid in return, believe that they are the Cinderellas of the medical profession.

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Bargains of the week: from the St Patrick's Day parade in Dublin to Copenhagen for £98 return and whale-watching off Mexico



■ *A selection of last-minute holidays and travel opportunities at home, on the Continent and farther afield, many at bargain prices*

BRITISH ISLES

A COTSWOLD hotel, dating from the 18th century, in a village famed for the 99 "sculpted" yews in the churchyard is on special offer this weekend from Sunvil UK. Dinner, bed and breakfast at the impressive Painswick Hotel for two nights from tomorrow costs £110. Details: 0181-232 9788.

■ WALKING weekends in some of Britain's beauty spots are about to begin again, with Acorn Activities leading the way. The March programme starts in the Cotswolds from March 5 to 7, with the South Downs and Sussex Coast, Lake District and Mid Wales featured on following weekends. Prices start at £120 for two nights' full board in historic hotels, with local guides to look after you. Details: 01432 830083.

■ ST PATRICK'S DAY and its parade plus fireworks, street theatre and a West Indian carnival on preceding days can be enjoyed on a four-night stay in Dublin with Cresta Holidays. Fly from a choice of UK airports on March 13 and four nights' B&B at a city centre hotel cost from £206. Details: 0161-926 9999.

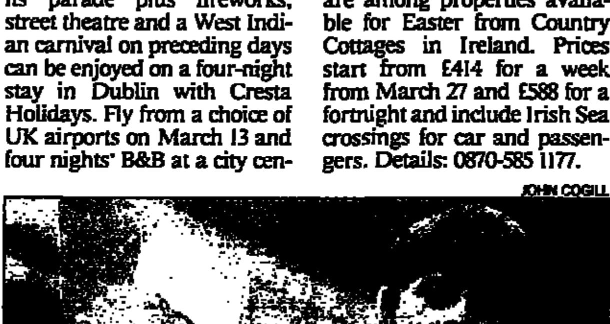
■ YORKSHIRE rooms with a view — over the bay at Scarborough or the market town of Malton — are available at special prices from English Rose Hotels next month. Dinner, B&B costs £29.50 a night for a minimum two-night stay. Details: 01723 374374.

■ ROOKERY HALL in Cheshire has welcomed celebrities from Baroness Thatcher to Posh Spice and David Beckham, but you can bet that very few of them indulged in the clay pigeon shooting and archery available on weekend breaks on March 17-18 and 23-24. Two nights' dinner, B&B and the activities cost £190. Details: 01270 610016.

■ CIRCUS skills, canoeing and caving will be taught to children and teenagers while their parents can learn archery, abseiling and survival skills on family activity holidays with Manor Adventure this Easter. A busy week at the Shropshire centre from April 3 costs £906 for two adults and two under-10s, including accommodation, meals, supervision and a day out at Alton Towers, just for a rest. Details: 01584 861333.

■ A HARBOUR cottage at Schull, Co Cork, and a timber lodge above Kenmare, Co Kerry, sleeping five to six people, are among properties available for Easter from Country Cottages in Ireland. Prices start from £414 for a week from March 27 and £588 for a fortnight and include Irish Sea crossings for car and passengers. Details: 0870-585 1177.

JOHN COGILL





Join in the St Patrick's Day revels on a short trip to Dublin

FRENCH PICTURE LIBRARY



Visit the garden at Giverny that inspired many of the Claude Monet paintings on view at the Royal Academy

THE MONET exhibition continues to pull in the crowds at the Royal Academy, London, and tour operators have come up with a series of offers for those inspired to visit the gardens that feature in so many of the paintings and which reopen on April 1.

Smart homes within a short drive of Giverny are available from the Individual Travellers Company, with prices starting at £235 for three nights and £516 for a week for cottages sleeping four. The offer includes a short Channel crossing and is available until May 27. Details: 08700 771771.

■ MAGIC of France is offering a half-day trip to Monet's home as an extra to two-night breaks in Paris, which cost from £154 with BA flights. Sea France also has "Monet-Savers", including ferry crossing and two nights' B&B at a chateau with sporting facilities and within reach of Giverny, from £107. Details: Magic of France, 0181-741 0208; Sea France, 0990 711711.

■ CABINS have become available for next week's cruise through the western Mediterranean to Madeira, the Canaries and Morocco with Festival Cruises. The late-availability price is £545, including a flight from Gatwick to Italy on March 4 and ten nights' full board on the *Azur*. Details: 0171-436 0827.

■ COPENHAGEN, with its canals and Tivoli Gardens, can be reached for £98 return with British Midland and is one of several European offers available until March 8. Your stay must include a Saturday night. Details: 0345 554554.

■ CHAMPAGNE for Mother's Day, both the place and the drink, is on offer from Crystal Premier France. Two nights' B&B, including March 14 at a hotel in Rheims, costs £46, with ferry travel for car and passengers, available from £99. Details: 0181-241 5030.

■ MALTA at a £120 saving is available with Belleair. Fly from Gatwick on March 14 and a fortnight's B&B at a Valletta hotel costs £341. Self-catering holidays are also on offer from the same date, starting at £218 for two weeks. Details: 0181-785 3266.

■ BELEK is one of the newer destinations on offer in Turkey and boasts sandy beaches with a mountain backdrop. From March 18, Metak will begin a programme to the resort, with a week's half board at an hotel with an 18-hole golf course costing from £439 with flights from a choice of London airports. Details: 0171-935 6961.

■ WALTZ off to Vienna and a three-night break with breakfast in a four-star hotel in the city centre will cost £277, including return flights from Heathrow. The offer from Leisure Direction is available until the end of March. Details: 0181-324 3030.

■ HOTELS in Italy remain at low-season prices with Room Service until March 15. A double room with breakfast at a three-star Rome hotel costs £45. Details: 0171-636 6888.

■ A TUSCAN villa with a choice of apartments sleeping three, four and five is on offer from EuroVillages. Prices start at £448 for an apartment in late March and include Channel crossing for car and passengers. Fly-drive holidays are also on offer. Details: 01606 787776.

■ A PILGRIMAGE to Lourdes during Holy Week could form part of a holiday in southwest France with The Gascony Secret. A small cottage for a week from March 28 costs £185, including Portsmouth-Caen crossing for car and passengers. Details: 01284 827253.

HIGH SEASON and hot weather continue in the Caribbean, making it difficult to find bargains — although plenty of holidays are still available, *Tony Dawe writes.*

The biggest discounts are at the top end of the market and the cheapest deal is for a week's two-star accommodation in Jamaica, which costs £399 from Lunn Poly with a flight from Gatwick on March 8. Details from the company's Holiday Shops.

The best all-inclusive offer appears to be a week at the Rex Grenadian, with a flight from Gatwick on March 17, that costs £799 from Tropical Places. Grenada has remained fairly unspoilt since the Americans and Cubans came to blows over it in the 1980s. Details: 01342 825123.

Definitely unspoilt is Tortola, where the British Virgin Islands Club is offering a fortnight at a discounted £1,595 for departures from Saturday until March 24. The price includes BA flights to Antigua, connections to Tortola and accommodation in hillside studios with sea views. Details: 0181-232 9781.

■ INSTANT sunshine and a new lifestyle are on offer from Co-op Travelcare, which still has places on a Sunworld holiday to Goa that begins with a flight from Gatwick on Saturday. A fortnight's B&B costs £409. Details: 0541 500388. If you fancy the former hippy paradise but need a little more time to plan, First Choice offers a week's B&B from March 4 for £439, including return flights from Manchester. Details: 0870-750 0001.

■ CANADA could be one of the safer places to ski in the coming weeks and Crystal is offering a week at Lake Louise from March 17 for £589. The price includes return flights from Gatwick and hotel accommodation with most meals. Details: 0181-399 5144.

■ DIVING, preferably in warm waters, is an alternative sport for this time of year, and Regal is offering a special deal to mark the addition of a new hotel in Hurghada, Egypt, to its Red Sea programme. A week's half-board at the El Gandoul from March 12 costs £199, including return flights from Gatwick. Diving courses start from £160 and a free try-dive is also available. Details: 01353 778096.

■ BLUE whales will be doing the diving, if you're lucky, on an expedition to the Sea of Cortez, off Mexico, with Wildlife Worldwide. The ten-day trip in search of the huge mammals will also call at uninhabited islands famed for bird life. The adventure begins with a flight from London on April 11 and costs £1,695 with accommodation aboard ship and in hotels, most meals and expert guides. Details: 0181-667 9158.

■ THE GAMBIA has been a little short of upmarket properties but the opening of Coconut Residence, set in an exotic garden with two swimming pools and boasting top-class chefs, has changed that. The Gambia Experience is offering a week's half-board at the hotel from £698, including return flights from Gatwick. Details: 01703 730888.



Find a deserted beach in Goa

● *All prices are per person and based on two travelling together and sharing a room unless otherwise stated.*



See *The Times* on Saturday for more flight bargains and last-minute holidays

Court of Appeal — Law Report February 25 1999 — Court of Appeal

Employers' pension duty to be honoured

Jefferies and Others v Mayes and Others
National Grid Company plc v Same
National Power plc v Feldon and Others

Before Lord Justice Nourse, Lord Justice Schiemann and Lord Justice Brooke

[Judgment February 10]

In the event of an actuarial surplus arising in the Electricity Supply Pension Scheme, an approved occupational scheme, the employers' obligations to make specified contributions had to be honoured.

Express provisions in the scheme requiring the employers to "make arrangements" to deal with such a surplus did not entitle the employers unilaterally to forgive themselves their existing accrued liabilities without there being an *amendment* to the scheme and without the agreement of the trustees.

The Court of Appeal so held in a reserved judgment allowing appeals by Mr David Laws, Mr Reginald Mayes and Mr Howard Machin, members of the pension scheme, from the decision of Mr Justice Robert Walker (*The Times* June 30, 1997; [1997] PLR 167) whereby he had

(i) allowed appeals by the National Grid Company plc and Mr David Jefferies and the other National Grid group trustees, from determinations made by the Pensions Ombudsman on February 7, 1997, regarding National Grid's use in 1993 of an actuarial surplus of some £62 million in part for its *own benefit and*

(ii) determined on an originating summons issued by National Power plc and to which Mr Machin and Mr Hugh Feldon and the other National Power group trustees were respondents, a similar issue relating to National Power's treatment of actuarial surpluses of some £303 million in 1993 and £74 million in 1996, and

(iii) declared that in the determination of deficiency payments under clause 13(1)(e) of the scheme, National Power could take account of any pre-funding that had taken place, that is, as employer it was not bound to make deficiency payments under clause 13(1)(e) except so far as they were actually needed.

Mr Nigel Inglis-Jones, QC and Mr Geoffrey Topham for Mr Laws and Mr Mayes; Mr Peter Crampin, QC and Mr Michael Furness for National Grid Company plc; *Mr Robert Ham, QC and Mr* Paul Newman for National Grid trustees; Mr Alan Steinfeld, QC and Mr John Stephens for Mr Machin; Mr Nicholas Warren, QC and Mr Christopher Nugee, QC, for National Power plc; the Pensions Ombudsman and the National Power group trustees did not appear and were not represented.

LORD JUSTICE BROOKE, giving the judgment of the court, said that the appeals raised points of interest and difficulty in relation to the treatment of an actuarial surplus in the Electricity Supply Pension Scheme.

At the risk of over-simplification, the central question was whether in the event of an actuarial surplus the employers, National Grid and National Power, were empowered to forgive themselves liabilities that had already accrued due from them to the trustees, in the absence of any express power *in the scheme, and in the* presence of an express prohibition against any amendment of the scheme which might permit them to take out of it any of its moneys.

The decision in the case had to turn on the provisions of the scheme; in many ways an unusual one. It had originated in two earlier schemes established by the Electricity Council in 1949 for employees in the electricity supply industry, brought into a single scheme in 1983 and significantly amended when the industry was privatised in 1990.

The scheme permitted the employers to take more decisions unilaterally than was usual in modern pension schemes.

By clause 13(1) of the scheme "the employers shall contribute to the fund ... (a) [monthly, a sum equal to twice the members' basic contributions] ... (e) in respect of *any member who retires ... or ceas*es to be a member on leaving service consequent on a reorganisation or redundancy before age 50 such an amount as determined by the *principal employer on the advice of* the actuary [deficiency payments]; (f) [supplementary payments under] rules 44(3) or 45(2)(b); and (g) [additional voluntary contributions]".

By a proviso to clause 13(1) the contributions, whether due and payable or prospectively payable, by an employer under sub-paragraphs (a) to (f) could be reduced or suspended, whether with retrospective effect or otherwise, to the extent of any overpayment under rule 44(3) or any surplus certified by the actuary under rule 45(2) *provided that agreement was reached* to that effect between employer/scheme co-ordinator/trustees.

There was no provision in the scheme whereby the employer was entitled unilaterally to *require* forgiveness of debts that had already accrued due from it, let alone the repayment of moneys within the scheme.

The general effect of clause 13(1)(a) to (f), *with the proviso*, was to provide that the employers' obligations to make contributions to the fund, with which the clause was concerned, should be honoured. *They should not be whittled* away by unilateral decisions on their part. If the need arose for any of the employers' unpaid liabilities under clause 13(1) to be reduced or *suspended, as was perceived might* be necessary, then express provision had to be made to that effect, as was clear from the terms of the proviso.

Clause 14 was concerned with regular actuarial valuations of the scheme. The crucial provision, clause 14(5), provided that if the actuary certified a surplus in respect *of benefits accrued to the date of* any valuation, as between the group assets and the group liabilities the principal employer "shall make arrangements, certified by *the actuary as reasonable*, to deal with such surplus".

That provision required the employer to "make arrangements ... to deal with such surplus". Thus *the question was: how free a hand* did the employer have when making those arrangements?

In particular, was it at liberty to ignore another provision of the scheme which appeared to deny it the power to make an arrangement it wished to make?

In that respect the appellants relied on clause 41(2)(b) that provided that "any amendments to the scheme shall be void to the extent to which it would otherwise have the effect of ... making any of the moneys of the scheme payable to any of the employers".

In resolving the remaining issues it was helpful to bear in mind some basic principles which were now fairly well established.

First, the court's approach to the construction *of documents relating* to a pension scheme should be practical and purposive, rather than detached and literal. Its provisions should wherever possible be construed to give reasonable and practical effect to the scheme.

Next, although an employer was not to be treated as a fiduciary when he exercised powers vested in him by the provisions of a pension scheme, *it* needed to be remembered that he owed an implied obligation of good faith to his employees.

It was also well settled that although *members of a pension* scheme had no rights in the surplus revealed by an actuarial valuation (see *In re Courage Group's Pension Schemes* ([1987] 1 WLR 495)), they had a reasonable expectation that any dealings with that surplus would pay a fair regard to their interests, since the express purpose of the scheme was to provide benefits *for their retirement*.

The present scheme contained rather more unilateral powers vested in the employers, as opposed to powers exercised by the employers and *the trustees* in concert, than was now customary.

In those circumstances it was particularly important that care was taken when interpreting the *employers' wide powers to ensure* that they did not go further than was permitted to them by the wording of the scheme, and the basic principles referred to.

After full and careful reflection, and approaching the matter in accordance with the general principles, the conclusion was that the employers were not entitled to forgive themselves unilaterally their existing accrued liabilities in the absence of any amendment to the scheme and without the agreement of the group trustees to whom those liabilities had accrued due.

There was nothing outside clause 14(5) to suggest that they had such a power and clause 14(5) did not purport to accord to them any such power.

Without having to decide the point, the court could see nothing in clause 41(2)(b) which would have prevented the employers from proposing and implementing an amendment to the scheme so as to have enabled them to take the course they sought to take, if they had thought it politic to do so, with or without the agreement of the group trustees.

The procedure prescribed by clause 41(4) would have enabled any doubts about the effect of the proposed amendment on the scheme's approved status to be resolved through the machinery there set out. The employers had not, however, taken that course.

Solicitors: Stephens Innocent; Eversheds; Dibb Lupton Alsop; Lovell White Durrant; Linklaters & Paines.

Volunteering to waive legal privilege

Regina v Bowden

Before Lord Bingham of Cornhill, Lord Chief Justice, Mr Justice Ian Kennedy and Mr Justice Jackson

[Judgment February 10]

Where at a police interview a suspect stated that he refused to answer questions on legal advice and at his subsequent trial evidence *was given of that factual statement* he did not waive legal professional privilege.

But where the defence at trial, in seeking to avoid the drawing of adverse *inferences, elicited evidence* of a statement made before trial by the defendant's solicitor of the grounds on which his advice not to answer pre-trial questioning had been given, privilege was waived and the defendant could be cross-examined on the nature of the advice and the factual premises on which it had been based.

The Court of Appeal, Criminal Division, so held, dismissing Brian Bowden's appeal against conviction of robbery following his trial at Manchester Crown Court before Judge Lakin and a jury.

Following a robbery of £9,500 in cash taken from a McDonald's restaurant, the defendant, who was then on benefit, went on holiday to the Canary Islands where he was photographed in celebratory pose outside a local McDonald's. On return he was interviewed by police but, on legal advice, declined to answer questions.

After the interview his solicitor made a statement of the grounds on which that advice had been given. The defendant was charged with the offence and pleaded not guilty. At trial the Crown led evi*dence of his refusal to answer pre*-trial questions but not of the solicitor's statement.

In his defence, the defendant testified that his mother had provided the holiday money and gave an explanation for the photograph. However, his counsel, concerned that no adverse inference should be drawn from his silence at interview, elicited evidence from the interviewing police officer of the solicitor's statement.

The judge acceded to the Crown's submission that the defendant had thereby waived privilege and he was accordingly cross-examined as to what he had told his solicitor about payment for the holiday and why the photograph had been taken outside McDonald's.

Ms Tanoo Mylvaganam for the defendant; Mr Antony Longworth for the Crown.

THE LORD CHIEF JUSTICE, giving the judgment of the court, referred to section 34 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 which applied if certain specified conditions were met and enabled the court or jury to draw such inferences as *appeared proper from a* person's failure when questioned before charge or on being charged or officially informed that he might be prosecuted, to mention a fact relied on in *his* defence to criminal proceedings.

The object of that section and of sections 35 to 37 was to weaken the protection which criminal defend*ants had previously enjoyed* against the drawing of inferences adverse to them from such failures and refusals in the circumstances specified.

Proper effect had to be given to those provisions; but since they restricted rights recognised at common law as appropriate to protect defendants against the risk of injustice they should not be construed more widely than the statutory language required.

There was nothing in those sections to suggest that Parliament intended in any way to modify the existing *law on legal professional* privilege.

The substance of that privilege had been defined by section 10 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, which had been presumed to give effect to the common law position: see *R v Central Criminal Court, Ex parte Francis and Francis* ([1989] AC 346), and the paramount importance of the privilege was not in doubt: see *R v Derby Magistrates' Court, Ex parte B* ([1996] AC 487).

It was well established that the privilege was that of the client. It *was waivable, but only by or on his* behalf and he could not claim privilege for what he had voluntarily revealed.

It made no difference whether the revelation was made by him or his legal adviser acting within the scope of his authority as agent on his client's behalf. Nor did it matter when the disclosure was made.

When a defendant at trial deposed to facts not mentioned earlier he might rebut the suggestion that they were a fabrication after the event by calling evidence to show that he had mentioned them to another person at an earlier stage and no waiver was involved even if the evidence was given by him or his legal adviser that that disclosure had been made to the adviser: see *R v Wilmot* ((1988) 89 Cr App R 341) and *R v Condron* ([1997] 1 WLR 827).

If, in the course of pre-trial police questioning a suspect went be*yond saying that he declined to an*swer on legal advice and explained the basis on which he had been advised, or if, as here, his solicitor acting as his authorised representative gave such an explanation, a waiver of the privilege was involved.

There would, however, be no waiver if, during pre-trial questioning, the suspect or his solicitor said that the suspect declined to answer *questions on legal advice and the* evidence called by the prosecution at trial was limited to reporting that simple statement.

If, at trial, the defendant or his solicitor gave evidence not merely of the defendant's refusal to answer pre-trial questions on legal advice but also of the grounds on which such advice was given or if, *as here, the defence elicited evi*dence at trial of a statement made by a defendant or his solicitor pre-trial of the grounds on which legal advice was given to answer no questions, the defendant voluntarily withdrew the veil of privilege and having done so could not resist questioning directed to the nature of that advice and the factual premises on which it had been based.

His Lordship considered that approach to be consistent with that taken by the court in previous cases: see *Condron* (at p837) and *R v Roble* ([1997] Crim LR 449) where the court had held that evidence of legal advice not to answer questions in interview, although not in itself amounting to a waiver of privilege, was unlikely *to inhibit the* jury from drawing adverse inferences, whereas if the reason for the advice were given, that was likely to amount to a waiver of privilege.

Where grounds for doing so existed it was open to defence counsel in the absence of the jury to submit that evidence of a police interview should be excluded under section 78 of the 1984 Act or that the judge should direct the jury not to draw adverse inferences from the defendant's silence at interview.

In some cases it might be appropriate to call evidence and then a *trial within a trial would be held. If* at such a trial evidence was given or elicited by the defence of the grounds on which the defendant was advised by his legal adviser *not to answer police questioning*, that would amount to a waiver of privilege for all purposes and whether the evidence was *repeated* to the jury or not.

The defendant could not at any stage have his cake and eat it; either he withdrew the veil and waived privilege or he did not and his privilege remained intact. He could not have it both ways.

Here the defence deliberately elicited evidence of the solicitor's statement at the pre-trial interview. There was nothing to suggest that he was not acting within the scope of his authority as the defendant's agent.

The defendant did not in any way dissent from or disown the statement, he therefore waived his legal professional privilege and it was open to the prosecution to question him about the information he had given to his solicitor.

Solicitors: Trevor Cox & Co, York; CPS, Manchester.

Convention does not demand disclosure

Regina v Stratford Justices, Ex parte Imbert

Before Lord Justice Buxton and Mr Justice Collins

[Judgment February 8]

It was not a consequence of article 6 of European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1953, Cmd 8969) that prosecution witness statements in summary proceedings had to be disclosed to the defence before the trial.

The Queen's Bench Divisional Court so observed in refusing an application by Colin Imbert for judicial review by way of certiorari of the refusal by Stratford Justices of November 13, 1997 to refuse to stay proceedings brought against him for threatening abusive or insulting behaviour and assault on a police officer.

According to the prosecution the applicant had been stopped by police officers in east London and had reacted to their questions with behaviour which grounded the charges laid against him.

At the pre-trial review of his case the applicant requested disclosure but the Crown Prosecution Service refused to disclose the police officers' witness statements.

When it came into force the Human Rights Act 1988 would make the provisions of the European Convention effective in the metropolitan law of England and Wales.

Article 6 of the Convention provides:

"3 Everyone charged with a *criminal offence has the following* minimum rights: (a) to be informed promptly, in a language which he understands and in detail, of the nature and cause of the *accusation against him...*"

Mr Nicholas Paul for the applicant; Mr David Perry for the prosecution.

MR JUSTICE COLLINS said that in cases tried summarily, there was no obligation to serve a defence statement. In *R v Kingston upon Hull Justices, Ex parte McCann* ((1991) 155 JP 569) the Divisional Court rejected an argument that there was any requirement of advance disclosure of witness statements and specifically decided that the absence of advance disclosure did not generally speaking render a trial unfair. The decision in *McCann* remained in force.

LORD JUSTICE BUXTON said that the prosecution in fact offered to hand over the witness statements but counsel had said that the issues before their Lordships raised questions of some importance.

What the court said in such a case would be, in technical terms, obiter. That was true twice over in respect of arguments that depended upon the 1988 Act.

The application said: "Article 6 requires the full disclosure to the defence of all relevant evidence."

The rights recognised by the *Convention had been interpreted* by the European Court of Human Rights at Strasbourg subject to "margin of appreciation", see for example *Handyside v UK* ((1976) 1 EHRR). *The application of that doc*trine would appear to be solely a matter for the Strasbourg Court.

By appealing to the doctrine that Court recognised that the detailed *content of at least some* Convention obligations was more appropriately determined in the light of national considerations. That approach was necessarily translated into a view of the meaning and *reach of the detailed provisions of* the Convention that was flexible.

The English judge could not himself apply or have recourse to the doctrine of the margin of appreciation as implemented by the Strasbourg Court. He must, however, recognise the impact of that doctrine upon the Strasbourg Court's analysis of the meaning and implications of the broad terms of the convention provisions.

Although the margin of appreciation doctrine did not appear to be expressly cited by the Strasbourg Court in respect of criminal proceedings under article 6 very similar expressions of policy had formed a part of the Strasbourg Court's exposition of its role in respect of the rules of criminal procedure of the member states, see *Saidi v France* ((1993) 17 EHRR 251).

The principle of looking at the *fairness in their entirety of the par*ticular criminal proceedings that were under criticism permeated the whole of the Strasbourg jurisprudence.

The applicant said that his strongest case was *Foucher v France* ((1997) 25 EHRR 234). The French Code of Criminal Procedure provided for the report of the official witnesses to be the actual evidence in the case, in the absence of proof to the contrary.

Foucher had been denied sight of that report before the proceedings in the police court.

The Strasbourg Court based its conclusion that Foucher's conviction had been obtained in breach of article 6 on the principle that a party to a criminal charge had to be afforded a reasonable opportunity to present his case in conditions that did not place him at a disadvantage vis-à-vis his opponent.

The parallels with the present case were not, however, at all exact.

First, what was witheld in *Foucher* was not a statement of what the prosecution expected or hoped the evidence to be, as in the case of prosecution witness statements in England, but the actual evidence itself.

Second, the dossier to which Foucher was denied access was not a set of documents held by the prosecution, but the court file.

Third, the requirement empha*sised by the Strasbourg Court was* that of equality of arms.

That clearly was not achieved in the French proceedings in *Foucher* because the Cour de Cassation *took the view that Foucher had no* right to see the evidence that the court had already filed with the court. It was very difficult to see what in the present case was the el*ement of inequality*.

Fourth, the Strasbourg Court in *Foucher* had been engaged in determining whether a completed process, in which evidence not dis*closed to the defendant had been re*lied upon in the actual trial, had been fair.

That fell very far short of the contention in the present case that a *failure in pre-trial disclosure neces*sarily made the whole of any subsequent proceedings, however much they revealed the nature of the prosecution case and permitted it to be *contested, unfair in Convention* terms.

The justices were quite right to hold that article 6 did not require them to stay the prosecution. The *outcome would have been no differ*ent had the case been decided under the provisions of the 1988 Act.

Solicitors: B. M. Birnberg & Co, Southwark; Crown Prosecution Service, Stratford.

Use of mirrors on site advisory

Rosser v Lindsay

The requirement in the Highway Code for the frequent use of mirrors was addressed *primarily to* drivers using the highway. For a driver manoeuvring his vehicle on a construction site it was a useful guide but not a prescriptive rule.

Lord Justice Potter so stated sitting in the Court of Appeal with Lord Justice Thorpe on February 4 dismissing an appeal by the plaintiff, Colin John Rosser, from the dis*missal by Judge Ticehurst in Bris*tol County Court on July 13, 1998, of his claim against the defendant, Paul Lindsay, the driver of a vehicle that hit him, for damages for personal injuries suffered when working as a gateman on a construction site.

HIS LORDSHIP said that the *plaintiff criticised the judge for not* finding a duty on the defendant to check his mirrors or observe the whereabouts of the plaintiff.

The Highway Code required *drivers to use their mirrors before* moving off and frequently while driving. Those observations were *addressed to drivers who might en*danger other road users.

In the context of a case concerning the manoeuvring of traffic on a construction site, such injunctions were a useful guide, but not a pre*scriptive rule*.

The judge was entitled to treat the plaintiff's argument as a counsel of perfection, rather than the test of what amounted to reasona*ble care in all the circumstances*.

European Law Report — Luxembourg

Unfair dismissal compensation equivalent to pay for equality law

Regina v Secretary of State for Employment, Ex parte Seymour-Smith and Another

Case C-167/97

Before G. C. Rodriguez Iglesias, President and Judges P. J. G. Kapteyn, J.-P. Puissochet, G. Hirsch, P. Jann, G. F. Mancini, J. C. Moitinho de Almeida, C. Gulmann, J. L. Murray, D. A. O. Edward, H. Ragnemalm, L. Sevón, M. Wathelet, R. Schintgen and K. M. Ioannou

Advocate General G. Cosmas

(Opinion July 14, 1998)

[Judgment February 9]

A judicial award of compensation for breach of the right not to be unfairly dismissed was "pay" under of Community equal pay law.

The Court of Justice of the European Communities so held, inter alia, on a reference by the House of Lords for a preliminary ruling under article 177 of the EC Treaty.

By section 64(1) of the Employment Protection (Consolidation) Act 1978, *as amended by the Unfair* Dismissal (Variation of Qualifying Period) Order (SI 1985 No 782), the right under section 54 of the Act not to be unfairly dismissed did not *apply to employees* not continuously employed for a minimum period of two years at the date of dismissal.

Similar provisions were contained in sections 94 and 108(1) of the Employment Rights Act 1996, which was not in force at the material time.

By section 68 of the 1978 Act, an industrial tribunal which found a complaint of unfair dismissal well founded could, if no reinstatement or re-engagement order was to be made, make a compensation award.

On the dismissal by industrial tribunals of complaints of unfair dismissal made by Nicole Seymour-Smith and Laura Perez, on *the ground* that the condition of two years' employment was not satisfied, the complainants applied for judicial review of the two-year rule, arguing that it was contrary to *Council* Directive 76/207/EEC of February 9, 1976 on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions (OJ 1976 L39 p40).

The Divisional Court having dismissed the application and the Court of Appeal having declared, on appeal, that the rule was incompatible with Directive 76/207 (*The Times* August 3, 1995; [1995] ICR 889) the House of Lords, on further appeal, referred five questions to the Court of Justice on the interpre*tation of article 119 of the EC Trea*ty and the directive (*The Times* March 14, 1997).

Article 119 provides: "Each member state shall ... ensure and ... maintain the application of the principle that men and women should receive equal pay for equal work. For the purpose of this article, 'pay' means the ordinary basic or minimum wage or salary and any other consideration ... which the worker receives, directly or indirectly, in respect of his employment from his employer..."

In its judgment the Court of Justice held:

The first question was whether a judicial award of compensation for breach of the right not to be unfairly dismissed constituted pay within the meaning of article 119 of the Treaty.

According to settled case law, "pay" in article 119 comprised all consideration received by the worker in respect of his employment from his employer.

The fact that certain benefits were paid after the termination of the employment relationship did *not prevent them from being in the* nature of pay, within article 119.

Compensation granted by an employer to an employee on termination of his employment was a *form of deferred pay to which the* worker was entitled by reason of his employment, which was paid to enable him to adjust to the new circumstances arising from the termination.

Compensation for unfair dismissal was designed in particular to give the employee what he would have earned if the employer had not unlawfully terminated the employment relationship; it was paid to the employee by reason of his employment, which would have continued but for the unfair dismissal.

The second question concerned the scope of the Community provisions.

Where the claim was for compensation, the condition laid down by the disputed rule concerned access to a form of pay to which article 119 of the Treaty and Council Directive 75/117/EEC of February 10, 1975 on the approximation of the *laws of the member states relating* to the application of the principle of equal pay for men and women (OJ 1975 L45 p19) applied.

It would be otherwise if the dis*missed employee were to seek rein*statement or re-engagement: in that case, the conditions laid down by national law would concern working conditions or the right to take up employment and would therefore fall under Directive 76/207.

The third question was whether the legality of a rule of the kind at issue was to be assessed as at the time of its adoption, or when it entered into force, or when the employee was dismissed.

It was to be noted at the outset that the requirements of Community law must be complied with at all relevant times, whether that was the time when the measure was adopted, when it was implemented, or when it was applied to the *case in point*.

However, the point in time at which the legality of a rule such as that in issue was to be assessed by the national court might depend *on various circumstances*, both legal and factual.

Thus, where the authority which adopted the act was alleged to have acted ultra vires, the legality of that *act must, in principle, be assessed* at the point in time at which it was adopted.

On the other hand, in circumstances involving the application to an *individual situation of a nation*al measure which was lawfully adopted, it might be appropriate to examine whether, at the time of its application, the measure was still *in conformity with Community* law.

With regard, in particular, to statistics, it might be appropriate to take into account not only the statistics available at the point in time at *which the act was adopted, but* also ones compiled subsequently which were likely to provide an indication of its impact on men and on women.

The fourth question concerned the test for establishing indirect discrimination.

The issue was whether the measure had a more unfavourable im*pact on women than on men*.

It had to be ascertained whether the statistics available indicated that a considerably smaller percentage of women than men were able to satisfy the condition of two years' employment required by the disputed rule.

That situation would be evidence of apparent sex discrimination unless the disputed rule were justified by objective factors unrelated to any discrimination based on sex.

That could also be the case if the statistical evidence revealed a lesser but persistent and relatively constant disparity over a long period between men and women who satisfied the requirement of two years' employment. It would, however, be for the national court to determine the conclusions to be drawn from such statistics.

The best approach to the comparison of statistics was to consid*er, on the one hand, the respective* proportions of men in the workforce able to satisfy the requirement of two years' employment under the disputed rule and of those unable to do so, and, on the other, to compare those proportions as regards women in the workforce.

It was not sufficient to consider the number of persons affected, *since that depended on the number* of working people in the member state as a whole as well as the percentages of men and women employed in that state.

In the present case, it appeared that in 1985, the year in which the requirement of two years' employ*ment* was introduced, 77.4 per cent of men and 68.9 per cent of women *fulfilled that condition*.

Such statistics did not appear, on the face of it, to show that a considerably smaller percentage of women than men were able to fulfil the requirement imposed by the *disputed rule*.

The final question concerned objective justification.

If a member state was able to show that the measures chosen reflected a necessary *aim of its social* policy and were suitable and necessary for achieving that aim, the mere fact that the legislative provision affected far more women than *men at work could not be regarded* as a breach of article 119.

It also had to be shown that the social policy aim was unrelated to any discrimination based on sex *and that the measure was capable* of advancing that aim.

The United Kingdom maintained that a member state should merely have to show that it was reasonably entitled to consider that the measure would advance a social policy aim. It was true that in Case C-317/93 *Nolte v Landesversicherungsanstalt Hannover* ([1995] ECR I-4625, *paragraph 33*) the court had observed that, in choosing the measures capable of achieving the aims of their social and employment policy, the mem*ber states had a broad margin of* discretion.

However, that could not have the effect of frustrating the implementation of a fundamental principle of Community law such as that of equal pay for men and women.

On those grounds the European Court ruled:

1 A judicial award of compensation *for breach of the right not to be un*fairly dismissed constituted pay within the meaning of article 119 of the EC Treaty.

2 The conditions determining whether an employee was entitled, where he had been unfairly dismissed, to obtain compensation fell within the scope of article 119 of the Treaty. However, the conditions determining whether an employee was entitled, where he had been unfairly dismissed, to obtain reinstatement or re-engagement fell within the scope of Directive 76/207.

3 It was for the national court, taking into account all the material legal and factual circumstances, to determine the point in time at which the legality of a rule to the effect that protection against unfair dismissal applied only to employees who had been continuously employed for a minimum period of two years was to be assessed.

4 *In order to establish whether* a measure adopted by a member state had disparate effect as between men and women to such a degree as to amount to indirect discrimination for the purposes of article 119 of the Treaty, the national court must verify whether the statistics available indicated that a considerably smaller percentage of women than men was able to fulfil the requirement imposed by that measure.

If that was the case, there was indirect sex discrimination, unless that measure was justified by objective factors unrelated to any discrimination based on sex.

5 If a considerably smaller percentage of women than men was capable of fulfilling the requirement of two years' employment imposed by the rule described in paragraph 3 above, it was for the member state, as the author of the allegedly discriminatory rule, to show that the *said rule reflected a legitimate aim* of its social policy, that that aim was unrelated to any discrimination based on sex, and that it could reasonably consider that the means chosen were suitable for attaining that aim.

Expatriate worker can sue own state

Terhoeve v Inspecteur van de Belastingdienst Particulieren/Ondernemingen Buitenland

Case C-18/95

Community law provisions on freedom of movement for workers could be relied on by a worker against the member state of which he was a national, where he had resided and been employed in another member state.

The Court of Justice of the European Communities so held, inter alia, on January 26 when giving, pursuant to a reference under article 177 of the EC Treaty by the *Gerechtshof te 's-Hertogenbosch* (Regional Court of Appeal), The Netherlands, a preliminary ruling on questions on the interpretation of article 48 of the Treaty and article 7 of Regulation (EEC) No 1612/68 of the Council of October 15, 1968 on freedom of movement for workers within the Community (OJ, English Special Edition 1968 (II) p475).

The proceedings were brought by Mr F. C. Terhoeve, a Netherlands national, in relation to an assessment made on him for income tax and social security contributions for the year 1990, for part of which Mr Terhoeve lived and worked in the United Kingdom, where he had been posted by his employer.

Article 48 of the Treaty provides: "(1) Freedom of movement for workers shall be secured within the Community"

Article 7 of Regulation No 1612/68 provides: "(1) A worker who is a national of a member state may not, in the territory of another member state, be treated dif*ferently from national workers by* reason of his nationality.

"(2) He shall enjoy the same social and tax advantages as national workers..."

For reasons given in its judgment, the Court of Justice ruled:

1 Article 48 of the Treaty and article 7 of Regulation No 1612/68 could be relied on by a worker against the member state of which he was a national where he had resided and been employed in another member state.

2 Article 48 of the Treaty precluded *a member state from levying, on a* worker who had transferred his residence in the course of a year from one member state to another in order to take up employment there, greater social *security contri*butions than those which would be payable, in similar circumstances, by a worker who had continued to reside throughout the year in the *member state in question, where* the first worker was not also entitled to additional social benefits.

3 A heavier contributions burden on a worker who transferred his *residence from one member state* to another in order to take up employment there, which was in principle incompatible with article 48 of the Treaty, could not be justified either by the fact that it stemmed from legislation whose objective was to simplify and co-ordinate the levying of income tax and social security contributions, or by difficulties of a technical nature preventing other methods of collection, or else by the fact that, in certain circumstances, other advantages relating to income tax could offset, or indeed outweigh, the disadvantage as to social contributions.

4 When assessing whether the burden of social security contributions borne by a worker who had transferred his residence from one member state to another in order to take up employment there was heavier than that borne by a worker who had continued to reside in the same member state, all income relevant under national law for determining the amount of contributions, including, as the case might be, income arising from real property, must be taken into account.

5 If the contested national legislation was incompatible with article 48 of the Treaty, a worker who transferred his residence from one member state to another *in order* to take up employment there was entitled to have his social security contributions set at the same level as that of the contributions which *would be payable by* a worker who had continued to reside in the same member state.



MOTOR RALLYING

Burns aims to keep his eyes dry in the heat

FROM JEREMY HART IN NAIROBI

THE only chance of moisture falling on the arid soil of central Kenya this weekend will be if Richard Burns, the Subaru driver, wins a masochist's motoring dream, the Safari Rally. Last year, the Oxford driver cried when he broke his world championship duck on the most gruelling round of the global series.

"This may be the hardest rally of all but it's not the toughest to win," Burns said on the eve of the start from here in Nairobi today. "But to win here you do need a strong hand: good car, good tyres, good pace, good fitness and good luck. Especially good luck. Maybe ten times more than any other event. But I can win again here."

Droughts have turned the Rift Valley into a dust bowl. Each rally car carves up tons of the terracotta brown earth, throwing it up into the hot equatorial air, and starting high up the running order is a distinct advantage.

"The Safari is known as a long distance event of old where the drivers never slept and drove for 3,000 miles." Burns, who relishes the challenge, said. "Now it's a sprint like a European rally, but still with the old conditions."

Teams have to build new cars specifically for the rally. Suspension and transmission are both strengthened and bull bars serve to protect the drivers against big game and local drivers who dare to share the roads.

When Burns achieved his first success last year in Nairobi he became only the third British driver to win a round of the world championship, following in the paths of Roger Clark and Colin McRae.

McRae retired from the 1998 Safari Rally after his Subaru suffered engine problems, and finishing this year, with the new Ford Focus unproven in East Africa's extreme 90 degree heat, might prove equally difficult.

"Of course, the lack of testing out here will be a potential problem but the reconnaissance went well and, although a win would be a touch optimistic, a finish is not out of the question," McRae said.

For Juha Kankkunen, Burns's team-mate, it will be his 130th rally start, an unrivalled achievement, and his dominance over three decades is still relevant, though he is without a world championship victory for five years.

"The rally has changed but so have I," he said. "There might be younger drivers but none with my experience. An old man can still win here."

Tommi Makinen, his Finnish compatriot, has come in for stinging attacks from both McRae and Carlos Sainz, of Spain, for making the sport boring after securing his fifth win in six rallies in Sweden ten days ago. The three-times world champion shrugs off the gibes, though, claiming it is not his fault.

"They should drive faster," the Mitsubishi driver said. "We are on a roll and there is no reason not to continue it in Kenya. Only rocks or rhinos could stop me."

Toyota have not won for over six months and have drafted in Ian Duncan, the 1994 winner and a local expert, to join Sainz and Didier Auriol. SEAT, the Spanish team who scored an unexpected sixth place with their two-wheel drive Ibiza last year, have Harri Rovanpera and Piero Liatti on board their still new world rally cars.



WEBSITE: www.rally99.com

Edwards keeps proving her resilience

SARAH POTTER


SIMON BROOKE-WEBB

Edwards has played international rugby for nine years and wants to be involved in the World Cup in three years' time

England held off Scotland at Twickenham on Saturday to retain their hold on the Calcutta Cup and this Sunday, in Richmond, they will do it all again — this time in the women's Five Nations Championship. The match promises to be as close and combative but, unlike in the men's version, it is Scotland who are the holders of the cup and the Five Nations champions.

England, building towards the next World Cup in three years' time, have opted for some fresh faces and the Scots will be heartened by the absence of some familiar adversaries, among them, Maxine Edwards, the prop forward.

One of the few black players to wear the white jersey of her country, Edwards will line up for England A — the hors d'oeuvre to the main event. Not one to swallow a setback lightly, she intends to serve up a reminder of her power and poise.

"There were some surprises in the team," she said, "but it's our first match of the campaign, so I'll work towards the ones to come. I certainly want to be part of the European tournament in April and the next World Cup." Few would bet against it, such is her proven resolve.

If there is an obstacle to be knocked down — opposition forwards included — then Edwards is not one to flinch. She won her first international cap against Wales nine years ago and has since juggled her time and resources to bring up her son, Sean, 6, and study for a degree at Greenwich University.

"Sometimes it has been an enormous struggle," she said. "Being a student is bad enough, but being a single parent, and doing my rugby training as well, it's bound to have been a strain. People ask me how I do it but, basically, I don't sit and think about it. I know what I've got to organise and I get on with it."

These were the skills she put to good use as one of the founder members of the Bromley women's club in 1984. "I was into karate, tennis and squash," she said. "Then I saw a poster in the leisure centre asking for people to help start up a rugby club. I went to the first meeting and that was that. There weren't many women's clubs then, and we didn't know what we were doing on the pitch, but it was great fun."

Now the sport is enjoying a boom. The Sports Council has identified rugby as one of the fastest growing women's sports and, according to Rosie Golby, secretary of the Rugby Football Union for Women in England, there are now 250 affiliated member clubs and 8,000 senior players.

In addition, 50 youth sides, from 12 to 16-year-olds, are spreading the game to a younger audience. "We're also getting more support from the men," Edwards said. "After the last World Cup, the RFU [Rugby Football Union] sent us red roses with a tribute to our success in the tournament. It was very touching and made us think they really were taking notice of what we were doing. Since then, we've had guest coaches to our training sessions, including Clive Woodward."

'Being a student, a single parent and doing rugby training is bound to be a strain'

Fitting then, that the women are seeking to emulate their southern hemisphere rivals, in an effort to become world champions. England lost their World Cup semi-final to New Zealand, the eventual winners, last year in Holland.

"There is a big difference between us," Edwards said. "New Zealand are very strong but they have a different level of support. They can train without having to worry about work and although we are now getting lottery funding, it is not yet enough to close that gap."

Unlike many of her team-mates, Edwards is fortunate that her employers, British Telecom, grant her paid leave to play. They also sponsored her three-year degree in business and promotion systems. "My current manager gives me time to go into the gym every day," she said. "I work it round my job, so that's fine."

Her daily training routine, not to mention the three-hour round trip from her home in Catford, southeast London, to her club, Saracens, sometimes causes strain, though she has supportive family and friends as back-up. "My son loves the Saracens girls and wants to play rugby, too," she said. "I always wanted children, though I thought I'd plan it later. I wasn't expecting Sean, but I don't regret him in any way.

"It's made me see things differently, so maybe I've got a balance about things if I don't get picked or something goes wrong."

At 33, some might take her demotion to the A team as a signal that her international career is over. Not so Edwards. "There's no peak age," she said. "You have to be good enough and want it — I still do."

SPORT IN BRIEF

Harvey signed to follow Walsh

■ **CRICKET:** Gloucestershire have signed Ian Harvey as their overseas player for the 1999 season. Harvey, who has played 11 limited-overs internationals for Australia, has been recruited for his medium-paced bowling, but is also expected to make a valuable contribution as a middle-order batsman. Harvey, who succeeds Courtney Walsh, said yesterday: "I am really excited about this opportunity. Gloucestershire have a reputation as a rapidly developing side."

■ **TENNIS:** The world No 1, Martina Hingis, wasted no time reaching the quarter-finals of the Paris Indoor Open yesterday, racing to a 6-1, 6-1, victory over Sandra Nacuk, of Yugoslavia, in just 41 minutes. Hingis, playing her first match since her victory in the Tokyo tournament, pocketed the first set with the cheekiest of drop shots and never looked back.

■ **ATHLETICS:** Michael Johnson, the double Olympic champion, and Marion Jones, the world championship 100 metres gold medal-winner, will compete in two international meetings in South Africa next month. The first is at Roodepoort, near Johannesburg, on March 19 and the second in Cape Town a week later.

■ **BADMINTON:** Ricky A. Subagja and Rexy Mainaky, the top-seeded doubles pairing from Indonesia, were beaten on the opening day of the world grand prix finals in Bandar Seri Begawan, the capital of Brunei. They lost to their compatriots, Flady Limpele and Eng Hian, 15-6, 8-15, 15-10.

■ **SKIING:** Anita Wachter, of Austria, won the women's giant slalom race at the World Cup meeting in Are, Sweden, yesterday, beating Andrine Flemmen, of Norway, by six-hundredths of a second.

SHEEHAN on BRIDGE

BY ROBERT SHEEHAN, BRIDGE CORRESPONDENT

In the Trials to select the British team for the 1999 European Championships Tony Forrester judged this hand well.

Dealer East **Game all** **IMPs**

North: ♠ A 10 8 3 ♡ A 4 ◇ Q 5 3 ♣ K 8 7 2

West: ♠ K J 9 4 ♡ 9 6 3 ◇ A 8 5 2 ♣ 9 4

East: ♠ 5 ♡ K Q 10 7 5 2 ◇ 10 7 ♣ A Q J 10

South: ♠ Q 7 6 2 ♡ J 8 ◇ K J 9 4 ♣ 6 5 3

W	N	E	S
P Hackett	*M Jones*	*A Forrester*	*J Collings*
–	–	1 H	Pass
2 H (1)	Double (2)	3 C (3)	3 S (4)
Double (5)	Pass	Pass (6)	Pass

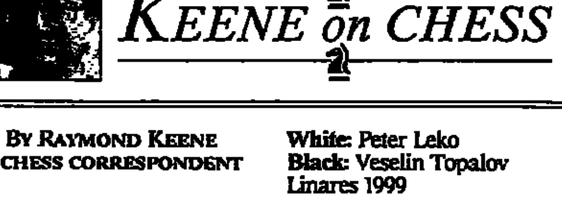
Contract: Three Spades Doubled, by South. Lead: nine of clubs.

(1) As East-West were playing five-card majors, West correctly raised hearts rather than introducing his spades.
(2) I think this is unwise. The opponents may be on their way to game, and in that case the double will help declarer in the play. It is true that players nowadays double light in this position. For example, on:

♠A1063 ♡4 ◇KJ63 ♣K872

many tournament players would double if the auction started the same way. This is sometimes referred to as "pre-protection". The theory is that the hand with shortage in the opponents' suit should strain to enter the auction – it will be more difficult for his partner to protect if he has length in the opponents' suit.
(3) Had North passed Two Hearts East might well have jumped straight to Four Hearts. But after the double there is a distinct chance that East-West will be defending a spade contract, and it is important for East to indicate a club lead, as the king is likely to be on his right.
(4) Obviously hoping for a more suitable hand opposite.
(5) For penalties of course.
(6) Now the possibility of making Four Hearts has receded, with partner likely to have only three hearts, and marked with high cards in spades. And partner is likely to be short in clubs, so there is a good chance of three tricks there.

After a club lead and the king of hearts switch, declarer returned a heart. East won with the king, put his partner in with a diamond, and three more rounds of clubs promoted an extra spade trick for West, for three down.



BY RAYMOND KEENE CHESS CORRESPONDENT

Fighting spirit

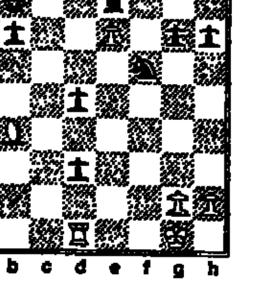
Although all the games were drawn in round three of the elite tournament at Linares in Spain, there was no lack of fighting spirit. The two draws that follow, in particular, displayed enormous enterprise.

White: Garry Kasparov
Black: Viswanathan Anand
Linares 1999

Queens Gambit Accepted

1	d4	d5
2	c4	dxc4
3	e4	e5
4	Nf3	exd4
5	Bxc4	Nc6
6	0-0	Be6
7	Bb5	Bc5
8	Nbd2	Qd6
9	e5	Qd5
10	Ng5	0-0-0
11	Bc4	Qd7
12	Nxe6	fxe6
13	b4	Nxb4
14	Qb3	Nd5
15	Ne4	Bb6
16	a4	a5
17	Nd6+	Kb8
18	Bxd5	exd5
19	Bd2	cxd6
20	Qxb6	dxe5
21	f4	Nf6
22	fxe5	Ne4
23	Bxa5	d3
24	e6	Qd6
25	Qxd6+	Rxd6
26	e7	Rf6
27	Rxf6	Nxf6
28	Rd1	Re8
29	Bb4	Draw

Diagram of final position



White: Peter Leko
Black: Veselin Topalov
Linares 1999

Sicilian Defence

1	e4	c5
2	Nf3	d6
3	d4	cxd4
4	Nxd4	Nf6
5	Nc3	a6
6	Be3	e6
7	f3	b5
8	g4	h6
9	Qd2	Nbd7
10	0-0-0	Bb7
11	h4	b4
12	Nb1	d5
13	Bh3	g5
14	hxg5	hxg5
15	exd5	Nxd5
16	Bxg5	Qa5
17	Bg2	Rxh1
18	Rxh1	Qxa2
19	Rh8	Rc8
20	Nf5	Nc5
21	Rxf8+	Kxf8
22	Bh6+	Ke8
23	Nd6+	Kd7
24	Nxc8	Kxc8
25	Qd4	Qa5
26	Bf8	Nd7
27	Bd6	Bc6
28	Bf1	Kb7
29	Nd2	Qa1+
30	Nb1	Qa5
31	Bd3	Qd8
32	Nd2	e5
33	Qc4	Qb6
34	Kb1	a5
35	Ne4	Nf4
36	Nc5+	Nxc5
37	Bxc5	Bd5
38	Bxb6	Bxc4
39	Bxc4	Kxb6
40	Bxf7	Nh3
41	c3	Ng5
42	Bd5	bxc3
43	bxc3	Kc5
44	Bb7	Kd6
45	Kb2	Ne6
46	Ka3	Nc5
47	Be4	Ke7
48	g5	Ne6
49	g6	Nc5
50	Bd5	Kf6
51	Bf7	Kg7
52	Kb2	Kf6
53	Kc2	Kg7

Draw agreed

☐ Raymond Keene writes on chess Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.

WORD-WATCHING

By Philip Howard

LATIMER
a. A schoolboy's satchel
b. An interpreter
c. A greave

MAIZENA
a. Maize starch
b. A medieval head-dress
c. Torture by water drips

MYGALE
a. An Aegean island
b. The shrew-mouse
c. A placebo ointment

LAMBEAU
a. A fillet
b. An outdoor candle
c. A tup lamb

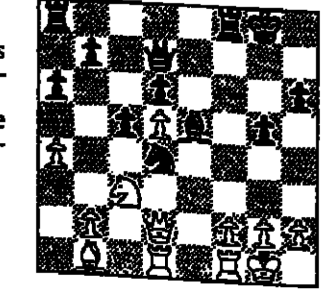
Solution on page 54

WINNING MOVE

By Raymond Keene

Black to play. This position is from the game Bengtson - Ivanov, Washington 1998.

How did Black bring the struggle to an abrupt conclusion?



Solution on page 54

RACING: POOR TURNOUT FOR WINCANTON CHASE SUGGESTS GOLD CUP CLUES WILL BE THIN ON THE GROUND

Double Thriller frightens off rivals

By Chris McGrath

IT IS very much a case of cheap thrills for those seeking endorsement of their Tote Cheltenham Gold Cup and Martell Grand National antepost vouchers at Wincanton today. Double Thriller inspired many such investments with the casual power of his success last month over the course and distance of today's Jim Ford Challenge Cup. He evidently made quite an impression on trainers of the horse's potential rivals, too.

These were reduced to just three overnight, which not only renders the race little more than an opportunity to show off, but also ensures that Double Thriller should go to Cheltenham with his "dark horse" status unilluminated. That will not worry Joe Tizzard or Paul Nicholls, who can keep Double Thriller fresh and confident for sterner assignments ahead.

Nicholls would have appreciated some more penetrative sparring partners. "All you can say is that he should win well, without telling us a lot apart from his general wellbeing," the local trainer said. "I would have preferred another five or six nice horses and for it to have been a good race, but the great thing is that he shouldn't have too hard a time. It'll help tighten him up for Cheltenham and Aintree."



Though his hunter chase defeat of Teeton Mill last spring — the grey's sole defeat under Rules — remains somewhat equivocal evidence, there is no doubt that the brawny Double Thriller (2.35) has the potential to prove a blot on the National handicap. But Cheltenham tops the agenda and the Festival, less than three weeks away, is also in mind for several horses contesting five other races on Channel 4 — notably the Axminster 100 Kingwell Hurdle.

Yet there appears little prospect of the winner getting any closer to Istabraq in the Smurfit Champion Hurdle than did I'm Supposin, who went on to finish third at Cheltenham after winning this last year. Grey Shot will be hard to pass dropped back in trip, though he is likely to be taken on by Fataliste and Upgrade. Between them they may set the race up for Chai-Yo (3.10), who likes to pounce late.

The ground may have dried out sufficiently for Wilmott's Fancy (2.05) to outpace the dour Bosuns Mate in the Dick Reynolds "NH" Auction Novices' Hurdle, while Moor Lane (3.40) is progressing apace and can complete a treble in the Tote Chase. His Doncaster form was franked when Manasis returned there yesterday.

At Huntingdon, Dangerus Precedent (3.25) will no doubt be at short odds to extend his sequence in the National Letterbox Marketing Juvenile Novices' Hurdle. He should do so if jumping with the same facility as at Doncaster last time, though frailties in the same department — along with faster ground — discourage interest in Tiraldo, who otherwise has ample ability for the Stephen Dean Novices' Chase. Heavens Above (2.50) offers each-way value.

Fataliste will be ridden in the Kingwell by Tony McCoy, returning after a fall at Ludlow on Tuesday. His mount is not in the Champion, where the Pipe stable has lost the sharpest arrow in its quiver in Wahiba Sands. He was missing from yesterday's acceptors — another major reverse for the champion owner, David Johnson, after his Gold Cup hope, Cyfor Malta, was ruled out for the rest of the season.

Johnson said: "Wahiba Sands has had a setback. It's very disappointing as my three best horses for Cheltenham will now be at Pond House for the Festival. Cyfor Malta, then Tipstaff, of whom I had great hopes, and now Wahiba Sands. He would have an outside chance of getting there, but we don't want to take a chance as he is next year's Arkle winner."

John McNamara, the amateur jockey, was given a ten-day ban for improper riding on Machouse Lady in the bumper at Doncaster yesterday. McNamara was deemed to have failed to pull her up after she went lame during the race. It transpired that Machouse Lady had fractured a leg and she had to be put down.

MARTIN LYNCH



Midnight Legend runs in Wincanton's Kingwell Hurdle

WINCANTON

THUNDERER
1.35 Andanito. 2.05 Bosuns Mate. 2.35 Double Thriller. 3.10 Grey Shot. 3.40 Seymourswift. 4.15 Miss Fara. 4.50 Neat Feat. 5.20 Mestre Sala.

GOING: GOOD TO SOFT (GOOD IN PLACES) SIS

1.35 GEORGIE NEWALL NOVICES CHASE (£5,225: 2m) (6 runners)

1 5-11US COUNTRY BEAU 47 (D,G,S) (Mrs J Popplett) J King 7-11-8 ... A P McCoy 119
2 /32133 DISTANT ECHO 61 (D,F,G) (M Fordham & B N Fulton) P Nicholls 9-11-8 ... J Tizzard [top rated]
3 2211-P ANDANITO 89 (D,F,G,S) (Lady Susan Clutton) Lady Herries 8-11-2 ... J Osborne –
4 051P0- BOUCHASSON 288 (D,S) (A Stennett) P Hobbs 6-11-2 ... R Widger (5) –
5 6051-0 JUST BAYARD 98 (D,F) (N Tatman) B De Haan 7-11-2 ... C Llewellyn –
6 0PP0-P NORA FOGHERTY 70 (Miss H Day) Miss H Day 8-10-11 ... S Wynne –

BETTING: 7-4 Distant Echo, 2-1 Country Beau, 7-2 Andanito, 12-1 Bouchasson, Just Bayard, 66-1 Nora Fogherty.

1998: COOL GUNNER 8-11-2 A P McCoy (13-2) J King 9 ran

2.05 DICK REYNOLDS NATIONAL HUNT AUCTION NOVICES HURDLE (£10,755: 2m 6f) (11 runners) C4

1 11-211 BOSUNS MATE 54 (F,G,S) (H Parker) N Twiston-Davies 6-11-2 ... C Llewellyn [top rated]
2 24-16F LORD NOELIE 55 (D,G) (Executive Racing Club) Miss H Knight 6-11-2 ... J Culloty 89
3 3-1211 HOMME DE FER 45 (F,G,S) (Miss M Vancatagadoo) K Bailey 7-10-13 ... Mr R Forristal 127
4 0P0-50 ARGUABLY 68 (Mrs C Murray) G Balding 7-10-12 ... S Fox 52
5 5-3440 LOOK SHARPER 13 (Against All Odds Partnership) R Buckler 6-10-12 ... B Powell 85
6 5-3115 NATIVE RECRUIT 83 (G) (J Wright) D Nicholson 6-10-9 ... R Johnson 112
7 206-00 SEEF 84 (Mrs S Horton) J King 5-10-9 ... T J Murphy 27
8 1-3211 WILMOTT'S FANCY 10 (G,S) (Mrs J Peatherer) Miss V Williams 7-10-9 ... N Williamson 112
9 531- GULLIBLE GUY 288 (F) (G Roberts) Miss V Williams 7-10-6 ... A P McCoy –
10 0/32 JAZZ DUKE 23 (M Weeden) M J Weeden 6-10-6 ... P Holley 97
11 524 MOLLY FITZ LAD 45 (Mrs E Hankinson) Mrs J Pitman 5-10-6 ... D Leahy 56

BETTING: 2-1 Bosuns Mate, 3-1 Native Recruit, 4-1 Homme De Fer, 5-1 Wilmott's Fancy, 14-1 Lord Noelie, Gullible Guy, 16-1 Jazz Duke, 20-1 others.

1998: MELODY MAID 6-10-7 M A Fitzgerald (7-2) N Henderson 7 ran

Bosuns Mate beat Yeoman Sailor 5l in 10-runner novice hurdle at Newbury (3m 110yd, soft). Lord Noelie fell in novice chase at Cheltenham (2m 5f, good to soft). Homme De Fer beat Kerry's Oats 5l in 15-runner novice hurdle at Fontwell (2m 2f 110yd, soft) with Look Sharper (11lb worse off) 15l 4th. Arguably a distance 7th of 15 to Native Buck in novice handicap hurdle at Uttoxeter (3m 110yd, heavy). Native Recruit 16l 5th of 7 to Barton in novice hurdle grade 2 at Sandown (2m 6f, good) with Lord Noelie (3lb worse off) 31l 6th. Wilmott's Fancy beat Bora Bora 6l in 16-runner mares novice hurdle at Hereford (2m 3f 110yd, good). Gullible Guy beat Master Rastus neck in 12-runner national hunt flat race at Chepstow (2m 110yd, good to firm). Jazz Duke 1½l 2nd of 12 to North Tyne in maiden hurdle at Taunton (3m 110yd, good to soft). Molly Fitz Lad 10l 4th of 8 to Errigal in novice hurdle at Fakenham (2m 4f, soft).

BOSUNS MATE makes plenty of appeal in his search for a treble

COURSE SPECIALISTS

TRAINERS	Wins	Rnrs	%	JOCKEYS	Wins	Rnrs	%
W Dennis	4	5	80.0	J Tizzard	3	11	27.3
P Nicholls	36	128	28.1	R Johnson	10	40	25.0
M Pipe	36	148	24.3	J Osborne	11	49	22.4
K Bailey	10	42	23.8	T J Murphy	12	54	22.2
Miss V Williams	3	13	23.1	A McCoy	24	113	21.2
D Nicholson	8	41	19.5	A Thornton	12	60	20.0

2.35 JIM FORD CHALLENGE CUP CHASE (£13,615: 3m 1f 110yd) (4 runners) C4

1 -12132 WAYWARD KING 12 (C,G,S) (Fieldspring Racing) R Hodges 7-11-7 ... R Dunwoody 127
2 /212-1 DOUBLE THRILLER 28 (CD,F,G,S) (R Wilkins) P Nicholls 9-11-5 ... J Tizzard [top rated]
3 F1/2U/ BILLYGOAT GRUFF 810 (BF,D,G,S) (P Cooper) C Morlock 10-11-2 ... R Johnson –
4 30U220 MELLING 10 (G) (Miss R Dobson) R Hodges 8-11-2 ... P Holley 84

BETTING: 1-4 Double Thriller, 4-1 Wayward King, 12-1 Billygoat Gruff, 50-1 Melling.

1998: GO BALLISTIC 9-11-8 A Dobbin (8-1) J O'Shea 5 ran

Wayward King short head 2nd of 4 to Flying Instructor in handicap chase at Newbury (2m 4f, good). Double Thriller beat Malwood Castle a distance in 5-runner handicap chase at Wincanton (3m 1f 110yd, soft); previously ¾l 2nd of 11 to Last Option in novice hunter chase at Stratford (3m 4f, good to firm). Billygoat Gruff unseated rider in handicap chase at Chepstow (3m 2f 110yd, good to soft); previously 2½l 2nd of 3 to Cherrynut in handicap chase at Worcester (2m 7f 110yd, good). Melling 34l 7th of 16 to Lough Lein Spirit in novice handicap chase at Hereford (2m 3f, good).

Gold Cup hope DOUBLE THRILLER is difficult to oppose

3.10 AXMINSTER 100 KINGWELL HURDLE (Grade II: £19,340: 2m) (6 runners) C4

1 44211- FATALISTE 329 (D,F,S) (T Painting) M Pipe 5-11-7 ... A P McCoy 121
2 11/331 MIDNIGHT LEGEND 19 (CD,F,G,S) (Mrs H Clarke) D Nicholson 8-11-7 ... R Johnson 126
3 64-460 BENATOM 12 (V,CD,F) (Lordship Stud) D Elsworth 6-11-2 ... P Holley 119
4 050-10 CHAI-YO 102 (D,G,S) (N Viney) J Old 9-11-2 ... T J Murphy 147
5 1-1126 GREY SHOT 26 (CD,G) (R Hitchins) I Balding 7-11-2 ... J Osborne [top rated]
6 P-3F0F UPGRADE 12 (D,G,S) (M Archer & J Broadhurst) N T-Davies 5-11-2 ... C Llewellyn 135

BETTING: 4-5 Grey Shot, 9-2 Midnight Legend, 5-1 Fataliste, 6-1 Chai-Yo, 12-1 Upgrade, 14-1 Benatom.

1998: I'M SUPPOSIN 6-11-2 R Dunwoody (4-1) R Rowe 7 ran

Fataliste beat Dawn Leader short head in 10-runner novice hurdle grade 2 at Aintree (2m 110yd, soft). Midnight Legend beat Master Beveled short head in 5-runner hurdle at Sandown (2m 110yd, good to soft). Benatom 35l 11th of 18 to Decoupage in handicap hurdle grade 3 at Newbury (2m 110yd, good) with Upgrade (11lb better off) fell. Chai-yo 28l 9th of 16 to Grey Shot (6lb better off) in handicap hurdle at Cheltenham (2m 110yd, good) with Upgrade (5lb better off) fell. Grey Shot 58l 6th of 7 to Lady Rebecca in hurdle grade 1 at Cheltenham (2m 5f 110yd, soft).

GREY SHOT, back to a more suitable trip, can edge out Midnight Legend

3.40 TOTE CHASE (SHOWCASE HANDICAP) (£7,393: 2m 5f) (10 runners) C4

1 24-212 LINTON ROCKS 131 (G,S) (Hon Mrs Townshend) P Nicholls 10-12-0 ... Mr S Stronge (7) 129
2 1/43P- BAVARD DIEU 439 (D,F,G,S) (Saguaro Stables) N Gaselee 11-11-6 ... C Llewellyn –
3 12-311 MOOR LANE 26 (G,S) (R Michaelson) I Balding 7-10-13 ... R Dunwoody 123
4 1-U40F GARETHSON 9 (S) (Mr & Mrs D Anderson) Miss H Knight 8-10-13 ... J Culloty 130
5 P-425F MR PLAYFULL 24 (D,F,G,S) (J Blake) R Frost 9-10-10 ... J Frost 133
6 -33541 REAGANESQUE 9 (F,G,S) (Mrs J Spielman) P Murphy 7-10-7 (6ex) ... N Williamson 125
7 /211-4 NORMARANGE 7 (D,F) (E Way) P Rodford 9-10-3 ... S Burrough 113
8 1-1544 SEYMOURSWIFT 9 (D,G,S) (Starlight Racing) D Gandolfo 9-10-1 ... S Wynne 118
9 2-U354 AMBLESIDE 23 (G,S) (B Yin) Mrs S Williams 8-10-0 ... T J Murphy [top rated]
10 2-5343 BEYOND OUR REACH 21 (BF,D,F,G,S) (P Axon) R Hodges 11-10-0 ... J R Kavanagh 131

Long handicap: Ambleside 9-13, Beyond Our Reach 9-11.

BETTING: 5-2 Moor Lane, 7-2 Reaganesque, 6-1 Linton Rocks, Mr Playfull, 9-1 Normarange, 10-1 Ambleside, Seymourswift, 14-1 Beyond Our Reach, 20-1 others.

1998: CAPENWRAY 9-10-3 A Dobbin (5-2 fav) J King 7 ran

Linton Rocks 2½l 2nd of 9 to Bank Avenue in handicap chase at Kempton (3m, good to soft). Moor Lane beat Manasis 1¼l in 7-runner novice chase at Doncaster (2m 3f 110yd, good to soft). Mr Playfull fell in handicap chase at Plumpton (2m 5f, soft). Reaganesque beat Kelly Mac 2l in 12-runner handicap chase at Leicester (2m 4f 110yd, good to soft) with Seymourswift (6lb better off) 6½l 4th and Garethson (6lb better off) fell. Normarange 9½l 4th of 16 to Raffles Rooster in handicap chase at Taunton (3m, good to soft). Ambleside 31l 4th of 8 to Country Store in handicap chase at Taunton (3m, good to soft). Beyond Our Reach 7½l 3rd of 5 to Rovestar in handicap chase at Towcester (2m 110yd, soft).

LINTON ROCKS, ridden by an accomplished amateur, is taken to defy his big weight

4.15 MERE MAIDEN HURDLE (£2,780. 2m) (18 runners)

1 ANGUS 44 (L Farmer) K Bailey 5-11-5 ... N Williamson –
2 G ATTO 48 (G Clough) J King 5-11-5 ... C Llewellyn –
3 0-2225 ESTATE AGENT 68 (D,F) (T & J Curry) P Nicholls 6-11-5 ... J Tizzard [top rated]
4 23 FOXES TAIL 7 (F Slade) R Hodges 5-11-5 ... J R Kavanagh 49
5 HENRY ISLAND 151F (J Hickford & M Hickford) M Pitman 6-11-5 ... L Corcoran (7) –
6 00 KOVACH 48 (Norwood Partners) D Nicholson 6-11-5 ... R Johnson –
7 PECCADILLO (C Elsbury) R Alner 5-11-5 ... A Thornton –
8 23 RADOMSKO 21 (B,BF) (J All Racing Stables) Mrs J Pitman 7-11-5 ... R Dunwoody 88
9 SLIP JIG 5F (N Shields) K Burke 6-11-5 ... J Culloty –
10 200 THANKS BIG FELLA 56 (Big Fella Partnership) C Weedon 5-11-5 ... B Powell –
11 5/3 GOOD THYNE GIRL 29 (R Fowler) R E Fowler 7-11-0 ... S Fox –
12 64 MADAME MAXI 24F (G Searle) H Howe 5-11-0 ... G Supple (3) 39
13 SAFFRON ROSE 136F (Lower Bowden II Syndicate) M Blanshard 5-11-0 ... J Osborne –
14 323 FATHER KRISMAS 23 (F Bonsal) P Nicholls 4-10-9 ... T J Murphy 102
15 FRANKLIN LAKES 182F (C Marks (Banbury)) M R Bosley 4-10-9 ... X Aizpuru (3) –
16 RON'S PET 125F (G Tee) R Hannon 4-10-9 ... B Clifford –
17 36 TALES OF BOUNTY 84 (BF) (Mrs M Meredith) D Elsworth 4-10-9 ... P Holley 85
18 2 MISS FARA 68 (Mrs C Painting) M Pipe 4-10-4 ... A P McCoy 77

BETTING: 3-1 Estate Agent, 7-2 Miss Fara, 6-1 Radomsko, 7-1 Henry Island, 8-1 Father Krismas, 12-1 Foxes Tail, Tales Of Bounty, 14-1 others.

1998: BENATOM 5-11-5 P Holley (5-6 fav) D Elsworth 18 ran

4.50 ILCHESTER HANDICAP HURDLE (£3,610: 2m) (12 runners)

1 -12144 NEAT FEAT 7 (CD,F,G,S) (Food Brokers Ltd) D Elsworth 8-12-0 ... P Holley 102
2 F-15P2 AFON ALWEN 68 (G) (Triple Two) P Hobbs 6-11-12 ... R Dunwoody 107
3 P/5025 MIM-LOU-AND 68 (D,F,G) (T Baddicombe) Miss H Knight 7-10-11 ... J Culloty 86
4 13F3F/ SEVERN GALE 840 (D,F,G) (Mrs C Allen) J Allen 9-10-8 ... X Aizpuru (3) –
5 /30-41 DUELLO 94 (D,G) (C McKenna) M Blanshard 8-10-7 ... N Williamson 106
6 3F4154 BRUSH WITH TIME 42 (CD,S) (W Peto) Mrs S Williams 7-10-6 ... A P McCoy [top rated]
7 10P-44 TWO TO TANGO 10 (G) (F Mills & W Mills) N Twiston-Davies 6-10-5 ... C Llewellyn 93
8 P65-31 HOT 'N SAUCY 8 (S) (Ruby Red Partnership) J Tuck 7-10-5 (6ex) ... R Bellamy 88
9 304360 RANGER SLOANE 38 (D,G,S) (G Fierro) G Fierro 7-10-4 ... J Goldstein (3) 96
10 0151-1 SYLVESTER 136 (F,G) (Miss A Broyd) Miss A Broyd 9-10-3 ... Michael Brennan 102
11 1-0115 CADBURY CASTLE 77 (D,G,S) (S Tindall) G Charles-Jones 5-10-2 ... L Cooper (7) 103
12 315/50 STONECUTTER 10 (B,D,S) (Miss S Debuante) J De Giles 6-10-0 ... Mr P Costello (7) 88

Long handicap: Stonecutter 9-12.

BETTING: 9-2 Hot 'n Saucy, 11-2 Sylvester, 6-1 Duello, 7-1 Afon Alwen, Brush With Time, 8-1 Neat Feat, Two To Tango, 10-1 others.

1998: SUPERMICK 7-11-7 A P McCoy (4-1) M Pipe 11 ran

5.20 GOLF COURSE STANDARD NATIONAL HUNT FLAT RACE (£1,474: 2m) (18 runners)

1 26 AU LAC 12 (D Hazzard) J Mullins 5-11-4 ... J Tizzard [top rated]
2 BARASHAN (Barashan Partnership) M Salaman 5-11-4 ... Ben Salaman (7) –
3 BARONS COURT (T Clack) T George 5-11-4 ... Mr S Stronge (7) –
4 2-2 HASTEN BAK 33P (Thurlestone Hotel Racing Club) R Frost 6-11-4 ... T O'Connor (7) –
5 MAIDSTONE MAGNET (F Wilson) M Pipe 5-11-4 ... C Durham (7) –
6 OKEFORD (Mrs B Tarlo) R Alner 5-11-4 ... Michael Brennan –
7 ROOSTER BOOSTER (N Mitchell) N Mitchell 5-11-4 ... Miss P Jones –
8 STRATCO (W Dennis) W Dennis 5-11-4 ... M Batchelor (5) –
9 SUNBURNT (Melolash Racing) R Buckler 5-11-4 ... D O'Sullivan (7) –
10 4/ THE LIGHTMAKER 733 (Dedsa Lighting Systems) R Alner 6-11-4 ... Mr J D Moore (7) –
11 TOM COBBLER (I Guest) N Twiston-Davies 5-11-4 ... J Goldstein (3) –
12 SHARED-INTEREST (D Adams) S Knight 5-10-13 ... Mr L Jefford –
13 BARRETTSTOWN (D Johnson) M Pipe 4-10-8 ... G Supple (3) –
14 CALHOUN (Mrs R Skan) P Hobbs 4-10-8 ... R Widger (5) –
15 GRAND COMMANCHE (P Hanis) W G M Turner 4-10-8 ... O McPhail (5) –
16 IT'S ALL GOOD FUN (Just Good Fun Club) M Pitman 4-10-8 ... L Corcoran (7) –
17 MESTRE SALA (Mrs Strachan, Gabb & Graham) H Daly 4-10-8 ... Mr R Forristal (5) –
18 NOAH (R York) R York 4-10-8 ... Mr P York –

BETTING: 11-4 Tom Cobbler, 7-2 Maidstone Magnet, It's All Good Fun, 9-2 Au Lac, 8-1 Barrettstown, 12-1 Hasten Bak, 16-1 Mestre Sala, 20-1 others.

1998: ESTATE AGENT 5-11-11 L Cummins (9-4 fav) P Nicholls 16 ran

HUNTINGDON

THUNDERER
1.45 Surprise Gunner. 2.15 River Bay. 2.50 Tiraldo. 3.25 Dangerus Precedent. 4.00 Destin D'Estruval. 4.30 O My Love. 5.00 Palatial.
Timekeeper's top rating: 4.30 O MY LOVE.
Carl Evans: 4.00 Destin D'Estruval.

GOING: GOOD (GOOD TO FIRM IN PLACES) TOTE JACKPOT MEETING SIS

1.45 SAWTRY FEN NOVICES HANDICAP HURDLE (£2,808: 2m 4f 110yd) (22 runners)

101 3-55 SILVER WONDER 19 (Odyssey Racing) N Twiston-Davies 5-11-10 ... T Jenks 77
102 546 THE LEADER 35 (P Oldfield) P R Webber 6-11-6 ... J A McCarthy 46
103 4F0-52 BERLIN BLUE 38 (P Douglas Engineering) R Stronge 6-11-4 ... R Thornton 97
104 2436 BALI STRONG 61 (G Hubbard) G Hubbard 5-11-4 ... C Honour (7) 55
105 11-2FP ASHGAN 33 (B,G) (A & Mrs L Bazley) I Williams 6-11-2 ... R Wakley 60
106 044130 BOLTON FOREST 38 (G,S) (T Phillips & P Simpson) C Mann 6-11-2 ... J Magee –
107 1-2654 L'IDEFIX 77 (G) (Mrs P Stevenson) T George 7-10-13 ... M A Fitzgerald 91
108 0-3060 SHARP TEMPER 26 (M Archer & Miss J Broadhurst) N Twiston-Davies 5-10-12 ... C Maude 100
109 5-F610 MY TERN 26 (S) (P Dutton, F Ford & D Silkwood) L Wells 5-10-12 ... W Greatrex (7) 92
110 46-450 PEG O THE WOOD 98 (Hero Pals) Miss H Knight 6-10-12 ... R Farrant 33
111 0-053 SIR VALENTINE 27 (Capt A Pratt) R Rowe 5-10-11 ... R Guest 51
112 0-33P4 KERANI 50 (V) (Mines A Double Club) F Bell 7-10-11 ... Mr N Fehily (7) 37
113 030-F3 HURRICANE JANE 89 (M Roberts) M J Roberts 7-10-11 ... C Rafter (7) 96
114 5U0331 SHANNON SHOON 28 (C,S) (Brampton Royal Oak) Mrs S Smith 7-10-8 ... S Durack 95
115 -20406 SAHARA REEM 12 (S) (M Clements) J Norton 5-10-6 ... E Husband 65
116 -41550 BAD BERTRICH 28 (D,F,G) (Clive Insley Advertising) G Roe 8-10-4 ... D Gallagher 80
117 030-64 WENTWORTH 41 (B) (J Wall) T McGovern 7-10-3 ... W Marston 32
118 66020U BILLY NOMAITE 13 (R Preston) Mrs S Smith 5-10-3 ... Mr J Crowley (5) 103
119 626 LAFFAH 43 (R Green (Fine Paintings)) M Pipe 4-10-1 ... Mr A Dempsey (3) 57
120 F3/00 POPLIN 101 (Mrs M Mann) Mrs D Haine 8-10-0 ... G Tormey 91
121 0/00-P FORTUNES FLIGHT 105 (J Ganelli) J King 6-10-0 ... A S Smith –
122 2-0001 SURPRISE GUNNER 8 (D,S) (N Vigan) Mrs M Jones 9-10-0 (6ex) ... A Maguire [top rated]

Long handicap: Poplin 9-11, Fortunes Flight 9-10, Surprise Gunner 9-10

BETTING: 5-1 Surprise Gunner, 6-1 Berlin Blue, 8-1 Laffah, 10-1 My Tern, Shannon Shoon, 12-1 Bolton Forest, Hurricane Jane, 14-1 others.

1998: NORMANIA 6-10-6 O Burrows (16-1) Miss S Edwards 19 ran

2.15 JOHN BIGG OXO HANDICAP CHASE (£5,836: 3m) (10 runners)

201 3/3-5P STAY LUCKY 47 (B,G) (M Buckley) N Henderson 10-11-11 ... M A Fitzgerald 112
202 U3-2F3 GRANGE COURT 89 (D,F,G,S) (DSM (Demolition Services)) I Williams 9-11-4 ... R Wakley 117
203 /12/P1 YANKIE LORD 36 (C,S) (Boys In Red) S Sherwood 7-11-3 ... G Bradley 113
204 5P-PPP DENVER BAY 21 (D,F,S) (B Naylor) J Gifford 12-10-11 ... L Aspell –
205 4-13PF GAELIC BLUE 70 (G,S) (T Hemmings) Mrs S Smith 9-10-11 ... S Durack 112
206 45F11P SMARTY 19 (B,S) (Mrs T Brown) Mrs J Pitman 6-10-7 ... A Maguire 127
207 PP-223 SWING QUARTET 141 (BF,D,F,G) (A Armitage) N Twiston-Davies 9-10-6 ... C Maude 125
208 4531F2 TOTAL JOY 10 (G,S) (Mrs M Warren) C Mann 8-10-1 ... Mr N Fehily (7) 121
209 3-6P00 BAYLINE STAR 33 (S) (A Barlie) Miss S Baxter 9-10-1 ... Gary Lyons [top rated]
210 P25220 RIVER BAY 9 (BF,S) (Ravenwood Racing) Miss H Knight 8-10-0 ... Mr A Dempsey (3) 121

Long handicap: River Bay 9-13

BETTING: 11-4 Yankie Lord, 3-1 Smarty, 6-1 Total Joy, 8-1 Grange Court, Gaelic Blue, Swing Quartet, River Bay, 10-1 others.

1998: SAMMORELLO 7-10-0 C Llewellyn (11-4 fav) N Twiston-Davies 9 ran

2.50 STEPHEN DEAN NOVICES CHASE (£5,160: 2m 4f 110yd) (10 runners) C4

301 -22212 NO MORE HASSLE 75 (BF,CD,G,S) Mrs M Reveley 6-11-9 ... Mr A Dempsey (3) 97
302 -22F1F TIRALDO 33 (S) (Mrs Graham, Mr J L Palmer & Mrs Griffith) H Daly 6-11-9 ... R Farrant [top rated]
303 2221/P ATOURS 8 (F,G,S) (Rose Partnership) Miss A M Newton-Smith 11-11-3 ... Edgar Byrne (7) –
304 02/0- BORODINO 447 (Mrs P Cooper) R Rowe 7-11-3 ... C Maude –
305 6/2/P- DANCE KING 430 (F) (T Connors) P Gurgan 7-11-3 ... S Curran –
306 13/32- HEAVENS ABOVE 475 (BF,D,F) (R & G Leonard) F Murphy 7-11-3 ... A Maguire –
307 0/PPPP JAKES JUSTICE 42 (D and M Evans) Mrs L Richards 8-11-3 ... J A McCarthy –
308 /1/004 MR EDGAR 72 (F) (F Rosenshell's Widow & Son) J Gifford 8-11-3 ... P Hide 95
309 -F0600 SAFECRACKER 27F (F) (Mrs J Todd) T Etherington 6-11-3 ... G Tormey –
310 5/PP3/ TOP OF THE RANGE 696P (S) (P Cornwell) P D'Arcy 10-11-3 ... W Marston –

BETTING: 11-10 Tiraldo, 5-4 No More Hassle, 12-1 Atours, Mr Edgar, 14-1 Heavens Above, 33-1 Borodino, 66-1 Dance King, Safecracker, 100-1 others.

1998: EIRESPRAY 7-11-3 R Guest (evens) Mrs S Smith 4 ran

No More Hassle 1l 2nd of 5 to Inn At The Top in novice chase at Doncaster (2m 3f 110yd, good), previously beat Grain D'Estruval 5l in 14-runner novice chase at Huntingdon (2m 4f 110yd, good). Tiraldo fell in novice chase at Haydock (2m 4f, soft), previously beat Cardiac Arrest 9l in 7-runner novice chase at Stratford (2m 5f 110yd, heavy). Atours pulled up in novice chase at Folkestone (2m 5f, good to soft), previously beat Land Afar 8l in 5-runner hurdle at Sandown (2m 110yd, good). Borodino 47l 13th of 21 to Country Beau in novice hurdle at Sandown (2m 110yd, good to soft). Heavens Above 8l 2nd of 5 to Jake Box Billy in handicap chase at Hexham (2m 4f 110yd, good to firm), previously 26l 3rd of 7 to Spearhead Again in novice handicap chase at Huntingdon (2m 4f 110yd, good). Mr Edgar 22l 4th of 13 to Salmon Breeze in novice chase at Folkestone (2m 5f, soft), previously 43l 10th of 12 to Dashing Dollar in handicap hurdle at Windsor (2m 6f 110yd, good).

NO MORE HASSLE and Tiraldo appear to have this between them with the former the safer proposition

3.25 NATIONAL LETTERBOX MARKETING JUVENILE NOVICES HURDLE (4-Y-O: £7,142: 2m 110yd) (8 runners) C4

401 141111 DANGERUS PRECEDENT 26 (CD,G,S) (C Brasher) C Egerton 11-5 ... D Gallagher [top rated]
402 11 ALBRIGHTON 8 (D,F) (J Guthy) F Murphy 11-2 ... A Maguire 30
403 F001 ZAPATEADO 19 (D,S) (M Archer & Miss J Broadhurst) N Twiston-Davies 11-2 ... C Maude 75
404 P LAST CHRISTMAS 54F (V) (Southern Counties Finance) J Jenkins 10-12 ... M Griffiths –
405 4 RIVER BEAT 19 (BF) (Grangewood Sales & Marketing) K Burke 10-12 ... M A Fitzgerald 41
406 STILL WATERS 10F (Mrs J Wood) K Bell 10-12 ... J Magee –
407 0 STOPWATCH 9 (Stopwatch Partnership) Mrs L Jewell 10-12 ... J A McCarthy –
408 0350P TIE BREAK 29 (J Joseph) J Joseph 10-12 ... G Bradley 48

BETTING: 4-9 Dangerus Precedent, 7-2 Albrighton, 11-2 Zapateado, 14-1 River Beat, 50-1 others.

1998: THE FRENCH FURZE 11-2 J Lower (1-3 fav) M Pipe 8 ran

Dangerus Precedent beat Ilahabad 14l in 10-runner 4yo novice hurdle at Doncaster (2m 110yd, good to soft); previously beat Noble Demand 10l in 11-runner 4yo novice hurdle at Cheltenham (2m 1f, good to soft) with Zapateado (9lb worse off) 78l 10th. Albrighton beat Master Tern ½l in 14-runner 4yo novice hurdle at Musselburgh (2m, good to firm), previously beat Roverello 9l in 13-runner 3yo novice hurdle at Musselburgh (2m, good to firm). Zapateado beat Mothers Help 4l in 8-runner 4yo novice hurdle at Sandown (2m 110yd, good to soft) with River Beat (levels) 23l 4th. Stopwatch 76l 7th of 10 to Goodwood Cavalier in 4yo novice hurdle at Leicester (2m, soft).

DANGERUS PRECEDENT is proving most consistent and can advertise his Triumph Hurdle claims

4.00 WIMBLINGTON FEN HUNTERS CHASE (£1,340: 3m) (14 runners)

501 51R5-P CHERRYNUT 12 (D,F,G,S) (T Barlow) Mrs S Mullineaux 10-12-10 ... Mr D Barlow (5) [top rated]
502 2B1-PB DAWN ALERT 18P (F,G) (A Howland Jackson) Mrs R Hayter 10-12-7 ... Miss L Rowe (7) –
503 010-FP MOORE'S MELODIES 18P (S) (M Gingell) M J Gingell 8-12-7 ... Mr M Gingell (7) –
504 10/4/1 TRADE DISPUTE 12 (F,G) (G Tuer) E W Tuer 7-12-7 ... Mr G Tuer (7) –
505 2F31-5 ANDERMATT 13 (G,S) (J Cornwall) J Mackie 12-12-5 ... Mr J R Cornwall (7) 100
506 FP45-1 DESTIN D'ESTRUVAL 13 (G,S) (Hogarth Racing) Miss H Knight 8-12-5 ... Mr A Dempsey 38
507 1PP-0F ROSKEEN BRIDGE 10 (D,S) (P Swift) P Swift 8-12-5 ... Mr N Kent (7) 43
508 5PP-P2 BABY JAKE 19P (D,S) (S Garrott) S Garrott 9-12-0 ... Mr S Garrott (7) –
509 111-PR BURNTWOOD MELODY 11P (D,G,S) (A Garland) A Garland 8-12-0 ... Mr R Armson (5) –
510 121/1/ GUITING GRAY 719P (D,F,G,S) (A Mason) Mrs C Bailey 12-12-0 ... Mr B Pollock –
511 1F423/ MR BOSTON 635 (CD,F,G,S) (M Oldham) R Woodhouse 14-12-0 ... Mr J P McNamara –
512 50P53- PANT LLIN 284P (B,CD,F) (F Matthews) F Matthews 13-12-0 ... Mr D O'Meara (7) –
513 005052 SINGLE MAN 162 (J Tuck) J Tuck 11-12-0 ... Miss T Blazey (7) –
514 /80-PP VINTAGE CLASSIC 141 (D,G) (Ever Smiling Partnership) G Brown 8-11-9 ... Mr N Fehily (5) –

BETTING: 7-4 Destin D'Estruval, 3-1 Trade Dispute, 5-1 Guiting Gray, 8-1 Andermatt, 12-1 Single Man, 14-1 others.

1998: FATHER RECTOR 9-12-10 Mr A Costello (5-4 fav) C Brooks 6 ran

4.30 102.7 HEREWARD FM HANDICAP CHASE (£3,969: 2m 110yd) (6 runners)

601 P1P14P SIERRA BAY 43 (CD,F,S) (R Waters) O Sherwood 9-11-13 ... J A McCarthy 116
602 2P134- GIPSY GEOF 271 (D,G,S) (G Hubbard) G Hubbard 8-11-9 ... R Thornton 118
603 /d3611 OSCAIL AN DORAS 41 (CD,F,G,S) F Murphy 10-11-0 ... Mr J P McNamara (5) 107
604 U44142 ROBINS PRIDE 22 (D,G,S) (Richard Weeks) C Popham 9-11-0 ... R Farrant 106
605 31-211 O MY LOVE 28 (CD,G,S) (Longdon Racing Club) N Babbage 8-10-7 ... G Bradley [top rated]
606 -32155 BLACK STATEMENT 61 (BF,D,G) (B Naylor) J Gifford 9-10-0 ... L Aspell 107

Long handicap: Black Statement 9-10.

BETTING: 2-1 O My Love, 11-4 Oscail An Doras, 5-1 Robins Pride, 6-1 Sierra Bay, 8-1 Gipsy Geof, Black Statement.

1998: NETHERBY SAID 8-12-0 R Supple (6-1) P Beaumont 7 ran

5.00 PIDLEY FEN MARES ONLY MAIDEN HURDLE (£2,724: 2m 110yd) (22 runners)

1 AGIFT 600F (Mrs P Robeson) Mrs P Robeson 5-11-5 ... M Richards –
2 334/0- ALISANDE 341 (Pell Mell Partners) J Glover 7-11-5 ... R Guest 26
3 00 BINT SHRUHOON 97 (A Khaleq) T McGovern 5-11-5 ... C Murray (7) –
4 43-14F BUCKSKIN CAMEO 73 (D,S) (B Fulton) P Nicholls 6-11-5 ... R Thornton –
5 0-5 CHELWORTH VI 28 (R Giles) J Spearing 7-11-5 ... G Tormey 39
6 02-0 DREAMINGTON ROVERS 8 (T Dunsley) J Jenkins 5-11-5 ... M A Fitzgerald –
7 HUSSY (Mrs E Courage) M Wilkinson 5-11-5 ... W Marston –
8 0P LEA VALLEY DANCER 10 (L Valley) J Jenkins 6-11-5 ... M Griffiths (5) –
9 000 LINDRICK LADY 12 (S Hutson) B Rothwell 5-11-5 ... A S Smith 45
10 5-00P PHAR AND AWAY 13 Countess Goess-Saurau 5-11-5 ... Sophie Mitchell –
11 P PRINCESS ROSHEEN 29 (Rosheen Around Partnership) Mrs L Jewell 7-11-5 ... T Peoples (7) –
12 6U- REGAL SWORD 308 (Mrs J Gifford) J Gifford 7-11-5 ... L Aspell –
13 56-0 SLIPSTREAM STAR 43 (Mrs S Tainton) N Twiston-Davies 5-11-5 ... C Maude 38
14 TAYOVULLIN 82F (H Morrison) H Morrison 5-11-5 ... T Jenks –
15 05 TYCOON TINA 12 (A Brooks Rankin) W Brisbourne 5-11-5 ... R Massey 58
16 1-03FP VALIANT MEMORY 45 (G) (Last Chance Partnership) N Chance 6-11-5 ... S Durack 65
17 U6P FRECKLES 10 (P Axon) M Ryan 4-10-9 ... P McCabe 30
18 KUSTOM KIT KATE 24F (Charterhouse Holdings Plc) S Bowring 4-10-9 ... T Dascombe –
19 U34456 MYSTERIOUS MISS 30 (Mrs C Mann) C Mann 4-10-9 ... Mrs C J Mann –
20 54 NOUVEAU CHEVAL 47 (Knight Hawks Partnership) M Pipe 4-10-9 ... J A McCarthy [top rated]
21 PALATIAL 90F (Mrs S Thomson Jones) Mrs D Haine 4-10-9 ... G Bradley –
22 TREASURE ISLAND 227F (Ferdy Murphy Racing Club) F Murphy 4-10-9 ... A Maguire –

BETTING: 9-4 Palatial, 3-1 Nouveau Cheval, 4-1 Buckskin Cameo, 7-1 Slipstream Star, 8-1 Chelworth Vi, 10-1 Valiant Memory, 12-1 Dreamington Rovers, 20-1 others.

1998: KATHRYN'S PET 5-11-5 P Niven (9-4 fav) Mrs M Reveley 20 ran

COURSE SPECIALISTS

TRAINERS	Wins	Rnrs	%	JOCKEYS	Wins	Rnrs	%
Mrs M Reveley	13	36	36.1	A Dempsey	3	5	60.0
T George	4	12	33.3	M Fitzgerald	17	75	22.7
M Pipe	9	28	32.1	P Hide	12	55	21.8
C Egerton	5	16	31.3	J McCarthy	12	70	17.1
N Henderson	11	37	29.7	G Bradley	9	68	13.2
G Hubbard	14	62	22.6	R Thornton	8	61	13.1

BLINKERED FIRST TIME: Huntingdon: 1.45 Kerani, Ashgan. 3.25 Last Christmas. Lingfield Park: 1.25 Pertemps Mission, Almohad, Red Brook Lad. 3.00 Tazkiya. 5.10 Mutaban, Hyde Park. Wincanton: 4.15 Radomsko

LINGFIELD PARK

THUNDERER
1.25 Red Raja. 1.55 Beguile. 2.25 Key To The City. 3.00 Sleave Silk. 3.35 Tear White. 4.10 Summer Bounty. 4.40 Genius. 5.10 REDOUBTABLE (nap).

GOING: STANDARD DRAW: 5F-1M, LOW NUMBERS BEST SIS

1.25 SEA OF H.E.A.T. & BARRIER AIR/COND HANDICAP (Div I: £1,688: 2m) (10 runners)

1 0-10 RED RAJA 26 (CD) P Mitchell 6-10-0 ... W Ryan 2
2 50-0 ILE DE LIBRATE 37 R O'Sullivan 5-9-11 ... S Whitworth 7
3 2356 PERTEMPS MISSION 13 (B,D,F) J Pearce 5-9-2 ... R Price 8
4 25-4 PREMIER LEAGUE 14 (F,G,S) K Cunningham-Brown 9-8-13 ... T Sprake 6
5 -120 SPA LANE 13 (D,F,G,S) Mrs S Lamyman 6-8-9 ... J Quinn 10
6 05-0 ABUSAMRAH 7J A T Murphy 4-8-5 ... T Williams 3
7 00-0 ALMOHAD 17 (B,S) Dr J Scargill 4-8-3 ... F Norton 1
8 0-00 SOVIET LADY 14 (G) R Ingram 5-8-1 ... N Pollard (3) 9
9 005- RED BROOK LAD 20J (B) S Dow 4-7-11 ... P Doe (3) 5
10 0580 COASTGUARDS HERO 8J (CD) B Pearce 6-7-10 ... G Bardwell 4

5-2 Red Raja, 4-1 Premier League, 5-1 Pertemps Mission, 6-1 Spa Lane, 8-1 Ile De Librate, Red Brook Lad, 16-1 Abusamrah, Coastguards Hero, 20-1 others.

1.55 SEA OF H.E.A.T. DIMPLEX & S.P. ELECTRICA HANDICAP (Div I: £1,728: 1m) (12)

1 540- MELLORS 75J (CD,F,G) M Heaton-Ellis 6-10-0 ... A Daly (3) 4
2 3353 ERTLON 9 (CD,F,G) C Britain 9-9-12 ... T Sprake 3
3 2-36 RAINBOW RAIN 19 (C,D,F) S Dow 5-9-11 ... P Doe (3) 1
4 02-1 PRODIGAL SON 22 Mrs V Ward 4-9-9 ... N Pollard (3) 11
5 5236 KI CHI SAGA 9 (B,CD) P Burgoyne 7-9-4 ... J Weaver 2
6 0-02 FAMOUS 16 (D,F,G,S) J Bridger 6-9-2 ... R Brisland (7) 7
7 0-40 FUTURE PROSPECT 33 (D,F,S) M A Buckley 5-8-11 ... A Culhane 9
8 3-46 BEGUILE 33 B Johnson 5-8-10 ... S Righton (7) 12
9 0-00 SHONTAINE 17 (C,D,F,G) M Johnston 6-8-8 ... R FitzPatrick (5) 8
10 0125 CLONOE 9 (C,D,F,S) R Ingram 5-8-4 ... J Bosley (7) 10
11 6541 KANAWA 3 A P Jones 5-8-2 (6ex) ... F Norton 6
12 00-0 MRS MIDDLE 51 (S) D Chapman 4-7-13 ... T Williams 5

5-1 Mellors, 6-1 Prodigal Son, Kanawa, 13-2 Rainbow Rain, 7-1 Famous, Clonoe, 8-1 Beguile, 10-1 others.

2.25 SEA OF H.E.A.T. & ECA APPRENTICES CLASSIFIED CLAIMING STAKES (£2,558: 1m 4f) (9)

1 -042 TIME CAN TELL 14 (C,G) A Jucles 5-9-5 ... S Righton 2
2 400- LAW DANCER 200 T Mills 6-9-3 ... Lisa Hackett (5) 5
3 4135 CAERNARFON BAY 9 (C) G L Moore 4-9-2 ... R Brisland 1
4 0011 SHANGHAI LIL 7 (CD) M Fetherston-Godley 7-8-10 ... P Goode 8
5 -204 KEY TO THE CITY 16 (S) P Eccles 5-8-9 ... S Carson 7
6 5/0/ AMONG ISLANDS 10J G Charles-Jones 8-8-6 ... L Newman (7) 6
7 6-00 NORTH ARDAR 27 (CD,F,S) R Brotherton 9-8-5 ... P Fredericks 9
8 [illegible] ... P Clarke (3) 4
9 [illegible]

[illegible]

3.00 SEA OF H.E.A.T. & BARRIER AIR/COND HANDICAP (Div II: £1,688: 2m) (9)

1 0-33 ARTIC COURIER 19 (V,BF,F,G) D Cosgrove 8-9-13 ... N Callan (5) 7
2 0-30 BEHIND THE SCENES 16 (S) C Cyzer 5-9-2 ... J Weaver 5
3 0-55 ROWLANDSONS CHARM 42 (C) Miss B Sanders 6-9-0 ... A Clark 2
4 -650 FOURDANED 14 B Johnson 6-8-11 ... P Doe (3) 3
5 06-0 NORTH OF KALA 6 G L Moore 6-8-7 ... Candy Morris 6
6 -122 SLEAVE SILK 12 (C) W Musson 4-8-4 ... J Quinn 4
7 01-6 HAPPY MEDIUM 6 G Enright 6-8-2 ... A Nicholls (5) 1
8 0322 KEEPSAKE 6 (B,F) M Usher 5-7-10 ... N Carlisle 8
9 0505 TAZKIYA 14 (V) R Ingram 4-7-10 ... A Polli (3) 9

3-1 Sleave Silk, 7-2 Artic Courier, 4-1 Behind The Scenes, 9-2 Keepsake, 8-1 Fourdaned, 10-1 Rowlandsons Charm, 14-1 Happy Medium, 20-1 others.

3.35 SEA OF H.E.A.T. & STIEBEL ELTRON HANDICAP (£3,556: 5f) (5)

1 21d1 TEAR WHITE 30 (CD,F,G) T Mills 5-9-10 ... L Carter 2
2 1322 MUKARRAB 9 (BF,CD,G) D Chapman 5-8-6 ... A Culhane 5
3 5224 PRIDE OF BRIXTON 19 (BF,D,G,S) A Reid 6-9-2 ... J Weaver 4
4 32d1 HALF TONE 7 (B,BF,CD,F,G,S) R Flower 7-8-4 ... J Quinn 1
5 5453 FRIENDLY BRAVE 7 (CD,F,S) Miss G Kelleway 9-7-10 ... C Cogan (7) 3

7-4 Half Tone, 9-4 Tear White, 3-1 Mukarrab, 7-1 Pride Of Brixton, 14-1 Friendly Brave.

4.10 SEA OF H.E.A.T. & SPACE AIR MAIDEN STAKES (3-Y-O: £3,022: 1m 2f) (6)

1 -445 BILLICHANG 9 P Howling 9-0 ... J Quinn 5
2 0-32 KING FLYER 16 H Collingridge 9-0 ... T Williams 1
3 035- SUMMER BOUNTY 148 B Hills 9-0 ... A Eddery (5) 3
4 0-5 DOCKLANDS MERC 14 R Phillips 8-9 ... M Tebbutt 2
5 MARRY ME C Britain 8-9 ... T Sprake 6
6 00-3 TICK N PICK 14 B Johnson 8-9 ... N Pollard (3) 4

4-5 Summer Bounty, 7-4 King Flyer, 10-1 Marry Me, 16-1 Billichang, 25-1 others.

4.40 SEA OF H.E.A.T. DIMPLEX & S.P. ELECTRICA HANDICAP (Div II: £1,718: 1m) (11)

1 3-00 GENIUS 28 (CD) S Dow 4-9-13 ... P Doe (3) 8
2 00-2 KINGS HARMONY 12 (C,F) R Ingram 6-9-11 ... J Savage (7) 10
3 4-00 POWDER RIVER 12 (D,G) K Burke 5-9-11 ... N Callan (5) 6
4 2066 MAWKAB 16 (CD) Miss G Kelleway 4-9-5 ... P Fredericks (5) 9
5 0554 L'ESTABLE FLEURIE 10 (C,F) B Smart 4-9-3 ... J Weaver 1
6 5-22 LANDRIFUN 30 (D) H Collingridge 4-9-0 ... J Quinn 2
7 8-40 MUSTANG 9 (B,C) J Pearce 6-8-12 ... R Price 3
8 000- MISS SKYE 88 (C) Miss B Sanders 4-8-7 ... A Clark 5
9 05-0 TARRADALE 13 (D,S) C Booth 5-8-3 ... D Mernagh (5) 4
10 0-56 VELVET JONES 12 G Charles-Jones 6-8-1 ... L Newman (7) 7
11 000- COURTNEY GYM 128 P Burgoyne 4-7-12 ... J Tate 11

11-4 Landrifun, 4-1 Kings Harmony, L'Estable Fleurie, 5-1 Mawkab, 7-1 Genius, 14-1 Mustang, 16-1 Powder River, Tarradale, 25-1 others.

5.10 SEEBOARD CONTRACTING SERVICES HANDICAP (£2,946: 7f) (8)

[illegible]

COURSE SPECIALISTS

[illegible]



RESULTS FROM YESTERDAY'S THREE MEETINGS

Doncaster

Going: good to firm, good in places

2.00 (2m 110yd hdle) 1, Overseman (R Dunwoody, 4-6 fav); 2, Lobuche (33-1); 3, Packitin Parky (100-1). 15 ran. 6l, 1¾l. J FitzGerald. Tote: £1.70; £1.10, £5.10, £22.00. DF: £20.40. CSF: £30.89.

2.30 (3m ch) 1, Stormyfairweather (M A Fitzgerald, 4-7 fav); 2, Grate Deel (8-1); 3, Mr Perkupp (33-1). 7 ran. 18l, 14l. N Henderson. Tote: £1.50; £1.40, £2.10. DF: £3.40. CSF: £4.87.

3.05 (2m 110yd hdle) 1, Ginger Fox (R Dunwoody, 14-1); 2, Hoh Invader (4-1); 3, Time For Action (10-1). Kathryn's Pet (6th) 2-1 fav. 9 ran. NR: Saint Ciel. 1½l, 1¾l. Mrs J Pitman. Tote: £9.70; £2.20, £1.60, £3.60. DF: £21.30. Tote Trifecta: £445.40. CSF: £65.40. Tricast: £546.92.

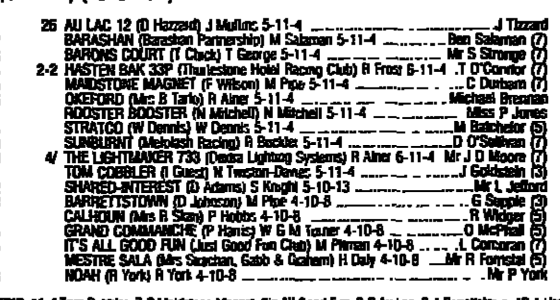
3.35 (2m 3f 110yd ch) 1, Manasis (A Dobbin, 7-2 fav); 2, Carlisle Bandito's (11-2); 3, Dragons Bay (12-1); 4, Verywell (25-1). 16 ran. ¾l, 2½l. S Brookshaw. Tote: £4.30, £1.70, £1.30, £2.80, £9.50. DF: £8.90. CSF: £20.37. Tricast: £199.70.

4.05 (2m 4f hdle) 1, Christiansted (A Maguire, 1-2 fav); 2, Lambrini Lad (10-1); 3, Northday (50-1). 9 ran. 24l, hd. F Murphy. Tote: £1.20; £1.10, £1.80, £7.20. DF: £4.40. CSF: £5.65.

4.40 (2m 3f 110yd ch) 1, Harfdecent (P Niven, 2-1 fav); 2, Jason's Boy (14-1); 3, Count Karmuski (5-2). 9 ran. NR: Another Red, Flaming Miracle. 12l, 4l. Mrs M Reveley. Tote: £2.70; £1.40, £2.40, £1.30. DF: £17.80. CSF: £26.87. Tricast: £65.08.

5.10 (2m 110yd nat hunt flat) 1, Ballet-K (R Johnson, 8-1); 2, Goodthyne Lady (3-1 fav); 3, Wynyard Dancer (8-1). 18 ran. 6l, 10l. J Neville. Tote: £6.50; £2.70, £1.60, £2.50. DF: £8.90. CSF: £29.52.

Jackpot: £696.40.
Placepot: £22.60.
Quadpot: £13.30.



Folkestone

Going: good to soft

2.20 (2m 1f 110yd hdle) 1, Charlie Chang (Mr R Forristal, 6-1); 2, Inclination (14-1); 3, Golden Fawn (100-30 fav). 14 ran. 10l, 2½l. B Llewellyn. Tote: £6.60; £3.40, £3.20, £1.70. DF: £33.60. CSF: £73.13. Tricast: £299.56.

2.50 (2m 6f 110yd hdle) 1, Hot To Trot (N Williamson, 8-15 fav); 2, Kellys Conquest (12-1); 3, Skipcart (15-8). 9 ran. NR: Magic Lamp. 3½l, dist. K Bailey. Tote: £1.50; £1.00, £1.60, £1.10. DF: £3.80. CSF: £7.76.

3.25 (2m ch) 1, Super Mac (C Llewellyn, 11-2); 2, Head For Heaven (10-1); 3, First Instance (3-1 fav). 9 ran. 3l, 4l. P Hedger. Tote: £6.90; £1.90, £3.30, £1.50. DF: £44.30. CSF: £53.43. Tricast: £179.52.

3.55 (2m 1f 110yd hdle) 1, Misconduct (W Marston, 11-4 fav, Richard Evans's nap); 2, Kerry's Oats (12-1); 3, Keen Bid (20-1); 4, Mr Leroi (25-1). 16 ran. 21l, ¾l. Mrs Merrita Jones. Tote: £4.20; £1.40, £3.30, £3.70, £19.70. DF: £30.10. CSF: £33.07. Tricast: £540.97.

4.25 (2m 5f ch) 1, Tomcappagh (Mr C Gordon, 14-1); 2, Hall's Mill (11-8 fav); 3, Sunczech (7-4). 11 ran. 1¾l, 15l. Mrs S Wall. Tote: £13.20; £1.70, £1.50, £1.20. DF: £12.20. CSF: £33.13.

5.00 (2m 6f 110yd hdle) 1, Equity's Darling (J Culloty, 10-1); 2, Fountain Bid (7-1); 3, Be My Mot (9-4 fav). 7 ran. NR: Saleal. 1¼l, ¾l. D O'Brien. Tote: £6.00; £3.80, £2.60. DF: £79.80. CSF: £67.32. Tricast: £194.08.

Placepot: £147.60. Quadpot: £97.50.

Wolverhampton

Going: standard

2.10 (7f) 1, Golconda (M Fenton, 2-7 fav); 2, Sea-Belle (10-1); 3, State Wind (5-1). 7 ran. NR: French Spice. 1¼l, ¾l. M Bell. Tote: £1.30; £1.10, £3.60. DF: £7.30. CSF: £5.06.

2.40 (7f) 1, State of Caution (D Sweeney, 5-1); 2, Elite Hope (5-2 fav); 3, Trojan Hero (7-2). 10 ran. 1¼l, 2l. K Burke. Tote: £5.30; £1.80, £1.40, £1.10. DF: £6.40. CSF: £17.05.

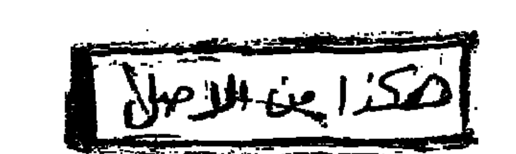
3.15 (1m 4f) 1, China Castle (P Goode, 5-4 fav); 2, Green Bopper (5-2); 3, White Plains (6-1). 6 ran. Sh hd, 2½l. P Haslam. Tote: £2.00; £1.20, £1.40. DF: £3.30. CSF: £4.50.

3.45 (5f) 1, Primo Lara (P Goode, 4-1); 2, Mangus (8-1); 3, Solonian (7-2 co-fav). Classy Cleo (5th) 7-2 co-fav. 7 ran. 1¾l, ½l. P Harris. Tote: £5.30; £2.40, £5.20. DF: £30.10. CSF: £33.37.

4.15 (1m 100yd) 1, Kingchip Boy (P McCabe, 5-1); 2, Josephic Wine (9-4 jt-fav); 3, Stravsea (12-1). Rich Ballerina (4th) 9-4 jt-fav. 13 ran. Nk, 6l. M Ryan. Tote: £6.50; £2.20, £1.80, £2.40. DF: £12.00. CSF: £18.43.

4.50 (1m 1f 79yd) 1, High Noon (J Tate, 4-1); 2, Prospector's Cove (3-1 jt-fav); 3, King Priam (10-1). Diamond Flame 3-1 jt-fav. 9 ran. 1¼l, nk. N Littmoden. Tote: £3.50; £1.30, £1.60, £1.70. DF: £9.70. CSF: £16.71. Tricast: £108.90.

Placepot: £48.20. Quadpot: £20.10.



FOOTBALL

Madrid call for Toshack to save their season

By Rob Hughes

JOHN TOSHACK and Kevin Keegan, who were as close as brothers in the Liverpool attack of the 1970s, are still playing the same game. It is short-term team management for long-term financial gain.

A week ago, of course, Keegan signed a contract worth £200,000 to coach England for four matches; this morning Toshack will become the coach to Real Madrid for 95 million pesetas (about £385,000), to oversee them through the last third of the Spanish league season and, starting at home against Dynamo Kiev next Wednesday, to attempt to help them to retain the European Cup.

Toshack yesterday was bought out of his contract with Besiktas of Istanbul for another sum approaching £1½ million in compensation, and added to the pay-off to Guus Hiddink, Real's dismissed Dutch coach, we can see why Real, once the most glorious club on the Continent, are now also one of the most heavily indebted.

"The team was not working. I think everyone should be at fault, but it is always the coach who pays for defeat," Lorenzo Sanz, the president of Real Madrid, said. The team that Hiddink inherited last summer was ill-balanced, the players palpably had stopped playing for Hiddink, at least in La Liga, and the record of Sanz, who has disposed of nine coaches since 1991, speaks for itself. Whoever pays, at least with their job, it is seldom the president.

Toshack, who built up Swansea City from the fourth division almost to the championship and then nearly bankrupted them in five astonishing years, made even shorter work of part-time national team management than is contemplated by Keegan. He was coach to Wales, by remote control from Spain where he managed Real Sociedad, for 47 days.

He moved around the Spanish peninsula, from Sociedad to Real Madrid for a couple of years in his first incarnation there, until Ramon Mendoza, the president before Sanz, ejected him in 1990. Toshack then retreated to Sociedad and had a spell with Deportivo La Coruña before his unhappy time on the Bosphorus with Besiktas. His return to the Spanish capital follows the rejection of the job, in the short term at least, by Fabio Capello. The Italian had built this Real side, and then departed by mutual consent because, among other things, he resisted requests to play Fernando Sanz, the president's son, in his defence.


Toshack: job may be short

The high quality that Capello left behind was harnessed by Jupp Heynckes, the German, to capture the European Cup for Real for the first time in three decades, whereupon Heynckes and Sanz predictably had had enough of one another. Enter Hiddink, who guided Holland to fourth place in the World Cup last summer but whose co-operative style of management, relying too much, it seems, on the self-motivation of players, began to fall apart this year. Hiddink did manage to win the World Club Cup with Madrid in Tokyo, though his side lost the European Super Cup to Chelsea, courtesy of Gianfranco Zola's magnificent goal in Monaco last August.

Meanwhile, in the cauldron of Madrid football, Atlético Madrid, whose president, Jésus Gil y Gil, eats coaches for breakfast, sacked Arrigo Sacchi a week ago. That weekend Real surrendered meekly, 3-0, in Barcelona.

Sanz briefly attempted to defend his coach, but after another defeat, this time at home to Athletic Bilbao, leaving them sixth in the league, nothing could spare Hiddink.

The task facing Toshack is similar to that facing Keegan with England: to breathe fire and self-belief into players who, for whatever reason, were not performing to their standards. The Real Madrid problems are that the team is imbalanced — they particularly lack right-sided attacking players, hence the £14 million five-year contract offered to Steve McManaman.

He, too, hails from Liverpool, but his path may not cross Toshack's. It is known that Sanz really covets Capello, who has a villa in Majorca, and had dinner with Sanz last weekend.

Capello indicated that a return to Estadio Bernabeu is attractive to him, but not before the summer. In that time, if John Toshack wins all before him, who knows if Capello's summer will ever come?

☐ Ronaldo resumed full training with Internazionale yesterday but when the Brazilian will resume playing remains uncertain. The striker, who played his last Serie A match in mid-January, will definitely miss the Italian league game against Juventus on Saturday and may also miss the European Cup quarter-final first-leg match against Manchester United next Wednesday.

"It's too early to make final plans about Ronaldo's return," Mircea Lucescu, the Inter coach, said. "He enjoyed training with the ball today."

Ronaldo, 22, kicked the ball with ease after five weeks of special training on a sand pitch. He has been suffering from tendinitis in both knees.

Branca is told he must see surgeon

FOOTBALL IN BRIEF

■ MIDDLESBROUGH are insisting that Marco Branca, their injured Italian striker, must visit a British orthopaedic surgeon before they will allow him to resume his career. Branca, 34, was informed by the Middlesbrough orthopaedic specialist last October that a serious knee problem could mean the end of his career. He has since received clearance to play professionally again by consultants in Belgium and the United States.

However, the FA Carling Premiership club have told the player that he must keep to the arrangement that both parties made last autumn. Branca agreed that he would receive a second opinion from Dr Dandy, a Cambridge surgeon recommended by the Professional Footballers' Association. Branca plans to see Dr Dandy next week.

Rodrigo Grau, 19, a Brazilian midfield player, is to join Middlesbrough on trial next month.

■ Kevin Campbell, the former Arsenal and Nottingham Forest striker, yesterday expressed his determination to leave Trabzonspor, after what he describes as racist insults from the Turkish club's chairman. Mehmet Ali Yilmaz told Turkish television over the weekend that Campbell's performance at the club had been a disappointment.

"We bought a cannibal who calls himself a striker," he said, describing the striker as "discoloured". Campbell retorted: "The chairman's statement is the greatest insult in my life. Nothing, no apology, can heal the injury."

■ Danny Wilson, the Sheffield Wednesday manager, has made a £2.5 million offer for Michael Mols, the Utrecht and Holland striker. Dutch clubs Feyenoord, Ajax and PSV Eindhoven are also interested, as are Everton and Derby County.

■ Nottingham Forest are to give a trial to Hector Louis Gordano, an Argentinian right back who plays for Rosario Central.

BEN GURR


Pulling power: Pinsent, aided by the non-competing Redgrave, who had flu, helping Leander lower the world 10,000 metres indoor record yesterday

Record row by charitable Leander

By Mike Rosewell

A TEAM of ten Leander members, with a 9.15am start, broke the world 100,000 metre indoor rowing record by 18min 42sec at the River and Rowing Museum at Henley yesterday. Their overall time was 4hr 44min 32sec.

The Leander contingent had seven internationals, including Matthew Pinsent and James Cracknell, part of the world champion coxless fours, but their crew-mate, Steve Redgrave, is still recovering from flu and could only watch.

Jürgen Grobler, their coach, had his men doing one minute stints for the first four hours. The slick changeovers on the indoor rowing machine were matched by the athletes' strength and, after 80,000 metres, Leander were 13 minutes inside the record. At his point, Grobler switched the changeovers to half-minute intervals to increase speed and the machine's 500 metre splits were recording under 1min 20sec.

"Where else is a machine going to get that sort of punishment?" a representative of Concept II, the makers, commented. As the museum filled with spectators at lunchtime, and with just 2,200 metres to go, the television monitors went blank. Apparently someone in the crowd had stepped on a cable. The computer was still functioning, though, and both Grobler and the crowd urged on the "in the dark" athletes for the expected last seven minutes, though, to be safe without visual timing, they did eight, covering an extra 1,000 metres. The Leander team's efforts raised £5,736 for Comic Relief, £5,000 from the Leander Club and £736 from Lombard, who sponsored Redgrave and Pinsent.

The Leander team were Matthew Pinsent and James Cracknell, Ed Coode and Richard Hamilton (Great Britain eight), Steve Williams and Fred Scarlett (GB coxless pair), Luka Grubor (GB coxed four), and non-internationals Dave Bushnell, Pete Gardner and Kingsley Poole.

RUGBY LEAGUE

RFL is primed for tri-nations series

By Christopher Irvine

THE tri-nations series scheduled to take place in Australia and New Zealand next autumn is not in jeopardy, Neil Tunnicliffe, the Rugby Football League (RFL) chief executive, said yesterday after speculation that Great Britain could be excluded.

In response to a suggestion that New Zealand would prefer a three-match series against Australia on cost grounds, Tunnicliffe said: "Gerald Ryan [the New Zealand Rugby League chairman] is reported as saying that he would like to see a business plan for the planned tri-nations. We have found that difficult to square with the fact that we received our copy of the plan last Wednesday.

"As far as the RFL is concerned, the International Rugby League Federation programme for 1999 has been agreed and confirmed."

Technical difficulties have been resolved to allow the introduction of a cricket-style system of green and red lights for try-scoring decisions in the televised Silk Cut Challenge Cup fifth-round tie between Leeds Rhinos and St Helens on Saturday.

Leeds have restored Martin Masella to the front row in place of Barrie McDermott, who is suspended after being sent off in the fourth-round defeat of Wigan Warriors. Having omitted Anthony Sullivan, who played rugby union for Wales A last week, Ellery Hanley, the St Helens coach, is set to spring another surprise by leaving Kevin Iro, the club's high-profile signing from Auckland, on the bench.

Hull Sharks have overturned their decision to end the two-year contract of Michael Smith, their New Zealand forward, after one appearance because of a breach of club discipline. Hull have fined Smith £5,000, with half suspended, and placed him on three months' probation, at the suggestion of Abi Ekoku, the Professional Players' Association chairman.

BOWLS

Difficult start for Ashby

CAROL ASHBY, the defending champion, but a relative newcomer to the upper echelons of the women's game, faces a tough challenge in the first round of the national indoor singles championship at the Isca Centre, Exeter, this morning (David Rhys Jones writes). She takes on Sharon Rickman, of King George Field, who has played for England for 12 years.

Ashby, 31, who is a member of the Professional Bowls Association, reached the final of the women's world indoor singles championship last April and has been rewarded with a place in the England side for the home international series in Belfast next month.

The 31-year-old secretary from Eastbourne is one of ten internationals in the field of 16. She has also qualified in the pairs and junior singles events. Jayne Roylance, the 1993 champion from North Walsham, Norfolk, meets Rene Barber, of Paddington, in the first round.

BOXING

Confident Hamed planning ahead

By Srikumar Sen, Boxing Correspondent

NASEEM HAMED has already picked his next opponent after Paul Ingle, whom he meets at Manchester on April 10. The World Boxing Organisation featherweight champion has lined up Vuyani Bungu, of South Africa, the International Boxing Federation super-bantamweight champion, for a bout to be staged in the United States, the Middle East or South Africa in July or August.

Hamed's brother, Riath, now the boxer's manager, said yesterday that all that remained was to complete the promotional details with Bungu's manager, Rodney Burman. "The match is perfect," Riath said. "Bungu is very credible. He's a world champion who is looking for a crack at the real big time and Naz fancies the fight. Also Bungu is, like Naz, a Home Box Office [HBO] fighter. As he is under the same umbrella, it's easier dealing with him than other opponents.

"South Africa is a good place for Naz, for the time zone is similar to Britain. Fighting on another continent could give us a chance to make a whole new extravaganza."

British boxing followers will be able to assess Bungu if he appears on the undercard of the Hamed-Ingle bill. Bungu, who has made 13 defences of his title, said that he would be moving up to featherweight when the deal is signed with Hamed. "I'm glad to get the chance to fight Naseem," Bungu said. "I've been looking forward to it for a year. It'll be the fight of my life."

Burman launched a new company, Golden Fists, yesterday to promote South African and British boxers in Great Britain. The company, which is backed by big institutions in South Africa, will hold its first show at Aston Villa Leisure Centre on April 1. It will feature two world championships, the British lightweight championship and Jane Couch in an eight-rounder against a German opponent.

RUGBY UNION

Dempsey returns at the expense of Woods

By David Hands and Mark Souster

GIRVAN DEMPSEY, the wing who was forced to miss Ireland's Five Nations Championship victory over Wales at Wembley last Saturday because of a hip injury, returns to the Irish squad to play England at Lansdowne Road on March 6. He does so at the expense of Niall Woods.

The return of Dempsey is consistent with the selection policy of Warren Gatland, the coach, but he will have made the change with an easier conscience after David Humphreys' kicking display against Wales, which earned him 19 points. Woods provided back-up to Humphreys, but now finds himself part of a much-changed A XV that will play England on March 5.

France have made two changes to their squad, for the game against Wales on March 6, from the one that narrowly defeated Ireland in their opening Five Nations Championship fixture. They have brought in David Auradou, the Stade Français lock, and Xavier Garbajosa, from Toulouse, who can play on the wing or at full back.

Players from Ireland and Australia will complete the Barbarians squad for a new fixture at the end of the season, on May 23, which will be part of a gala day at Twickenham. The Barbarians have taken over the Sanyo Cup fixture in which, for the past three years, a world XV coached by Bob Dwyer has played the English league champions.

England's squad, which will travel to Australia for a World Cup training camp later in the week, assembles on the same day, but first-division clubs have agreed that all their players will be available.

Richmond and Harlequins, whose failure to agree the date of their Premiership fixture last November cost Richmond two league points, must play on May 3. Both clubs have Anglo-Welsh fixtures 48 hours earlier, which will have influenced the decision of an independent commission established by English Rugby Partnership.

The Scottish Rugby Union is expected to issue a statement today regarding the Martin Johnson stamping affair at Twickenham on Saturday. Last night the union's disciplinary committee discussed the incident involving John Leslie for which Johnson received a yellow card.


Dempsey: recovered

IRELAND SQUAD: Backs: C O'Shea, G Dempsey, J Bishop, K Maggs, J Bell, R Henderson, D Humphreys, E Elwood, C McGuinness, C Scally. Forwards: P Clohessy, P Wallace, J Fitzpatrick, K Wood, R Nesdale, P Johns, J Davidson, M Galwey, E Miller, V Costello, D O'Cuinneagain, A Ward.

FRANCE SQUAD: Backs: D Aucagne, P Bernat-Salles, P Carbonneau, T Castaignède, F Comba, R Dourthe, X Garbajosa, C Laussucq, T Lombard, E Ntamack. Forwards: D Auradou, P Benetton, O Brouzet, C Califano, M Dal Maso, R Ibanez, T Lievremont, O Magne, S Marconnet, O Pelous, M Raynaud, F Tournaire.

RAF game is far from plane sailing



London Society referee Nick Clarke this week received the very best excuse for cancelling a match — plane stopped play. Clarke explains: "I was due to officiate at a Wednesday night clash between London Scottish II versus the RAF. Mid-morning I had a call from Scottish saying the game was off. Frozen ground, I thought. Maybe pitch not covered? No."

Clarke continues: "The RAF were due to fly down from Lossiemouth in Scotland to RAF Brize Norton. However, RAF weathermen had banned the plane from taking off because, by the time the team had flown back to their northern base that night, weather conditions would not have allowed them to land safely. So plane stopped play."

Beware big foot

Does Rich Williams have the biggest teenage feet in England? The 15-year-old wears size 17 shoes and cannot find boots big enough to fit him off the shelf. Rich was in the Bristol Junior Combination development side that provided the pre-match action before the game between England and Scotland at Twickenham last Saturday. Not surprisingly, his boots have to be specially made.

Peace talks

At the Irish Embassy on Friday night there was a party to mark the centenary of London Irish. Amid the hubbub came an instructive meeting between Syd Millar, one of Ireland's International Board representatives, and Nigel Wray, the owner of Saracens.

Millar greeted Wray with his long held view that "world rugby will not allow a handful of English clubs to run the game". Wray assured him that was far from the case, and the two me happily exchanged telephone numbers. How appropriate if some kind of peace process should have broken out under the Irish flag.

Married bliss

Patrick Sebastien was a big man in France's entertainment business — a younger version of Terry Wogan, my man on the Continent tells me — and clearly retains a certain style.

Now president of Brive, Sebastien married his bride, Natalie, on the pitch at before the start of the first division match against Toulouse before 18,000 witnesses. Brive won the game 25-21.

Funny old game

There were red faces at the traditional committees dinner at the Selfridge Hotel in London on Friday night before the Calcutta Cup match at Twickenham. In what was meant to be a tongue-in-cheek reference to England's temporary expulsion from the Five Nations, Jeff Addison, junior vice-president of the Rugby Football Union (RFU), thanked Allan Hosie, the Scottish chairman of the Five Nations Committee, for "allowing the game to go ahead. At least we don't have to go into the fixture pool for a match!".

The humour was not widely appreciated. That was not the only friction. Some English officials took exception to what they felt were pointed and disparaging remarks in a speech made by Derek Brown, president of the Scottish Rugby Union. Sounds like a fun evening was had by all.

Scott turns tutor

Scott Quinnell went back to school on Tuesday to help launch a three-year rugby development project in West Wales. Quinnell returned to the Five Road Primary School just outside Llanelli, where he was taught, and where his daughter, Samantha, is now a pupil. It is all part of the rugby in the community initiative pioneered by the club and sponsored by McDonalds with the help of Sportsmatch. Quinnell said: "If we can inspire youngsters to play the game then great."

Quinnell: inspiration

Graham reverse

Graham Cattermole has suffered another setback in his attempts to get onto the Rugby Football Union management board. At an RFU council meeting last week a proposal was made that Cattermole should be elected on to the board — but he received only 16 votes, not nearly enough for him to get a seat.

Naked truth

It appears that the rugby club's "gentleman's night" has gone the way of so many of the game's traditions. Centaur, the male dance troupe from Swansea, have torn Newport rugby club off a strip after their near sell-out show planned for this Friday was cancelled. Newport, it transpires, did not want the Full Monty.

"We thought they didn't go all the way," Peter Banner, commercial director for the club, said. "We have a 100-year tradition and did not want that destroyed."

Mark Souster

German's withdrawal from Guardian Direct Cup disappoints paying public

Battersea blow as Becker drops out

By Julian Muscat, Tennis Correspondent

THE ONLY souls unperturbed by Boris Becker's frail health are the tennis tournament directors, who continue to dispense him wild cards despite his regular failure to show. The British public yesterday became the latest paying casualties of Becker's physical complaints when the German withdrew from the Guardian Direct Cup in Battersea Park.

Becker had long since departed the tournament site when his exit was announced. The man was suffering from a stomach viral infection, the same complaint that Jan Michael Gambill took with him to the court when beaten by Davide Sanguinetti, of Italy, in straight sets yesterday.

Becker's long and undignified slide towards retirement thus continues in familiar vein. Much more of this and the Howard Hughes of tennis may not be remembered with the affection generated by three Wimbledon titles and an adoring German public.

Tournament directors hang on Becker's every promise because he sells tickets. "There's no question, he is a draw to the event," Patricio Apey, the tournament joint-director at Battersea, said. "It is disappointing to say the least. He is a big part of recent tennis history, but what can you do?"

A former world No 1, Becker fulfilled his doubles commitments on Tuesday evening, when, in tandem with Goran Ivanisevic, the combination lost in three demanding sets. "I was really looking forward to offering the public in London, one of my favourite ones, a good match," Becker said in a statement before departing.

Becker has scaled down his appearances of late. He has stayed competitive enough to represent his country at doubles in Davis Cup ties. However, Carl-Uwe Steeb, Germany's Davis Cup captain, yesterday voiced doubts in a press conference in Frankfurt that Becker would maintain his alliance with David Prinosil for the tie with Russia in April.

Becker's replacement here, as a lucky loser from the qualifying competition, is Rainer Schuttler, his German compatriot, who rapidly retraced his steps from the airport to play Karol Kucera last night. Schuttler was just a couple of strides from clearing immigration when he received his summons.

From a competitive perspective, Schuttler substituting for Becker considerably strengthens the field at this £500,000 event. Whereas Becker has lost his only match this year, Schuttler beat Tim Henman in the final in Doha. He also ran the Briton close at the same venue 12 months ago before Henman prevailed 4-6, 6-3, 6-4.

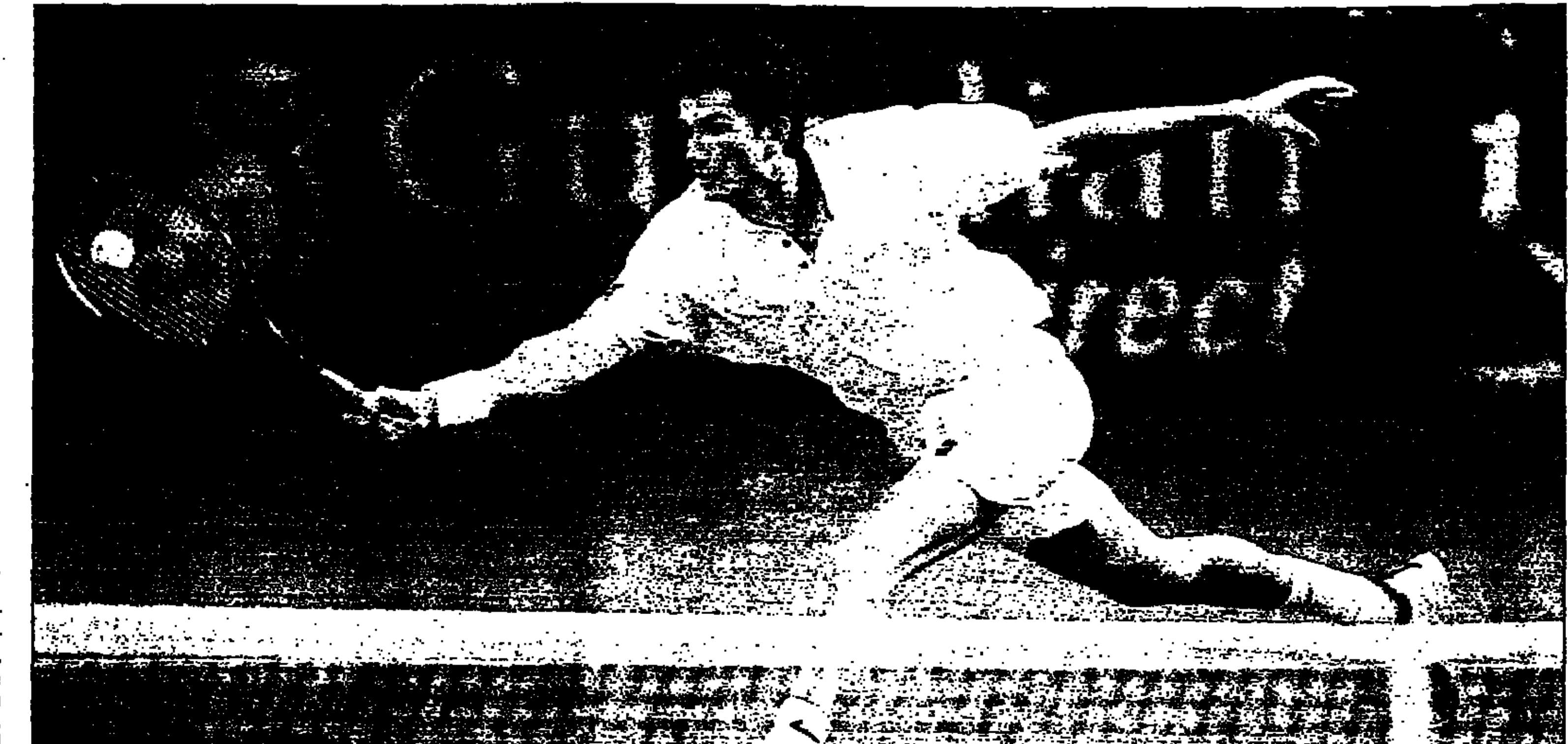
For all his evident frailties, Becker remains a huge draw for the paying public. His name adorns billboards at the entrance to Battersea Park, just as it featured prominently in all advance publicity for this tournament. Becker withdrew just before the draw in Doha, the opening event this year, citing security problems around Iraq. He then lost to Jonas Bjorkman in the first round in Dubai before withdrawing from Rotterdam last week, this time with an injured ankle. His regular absence from Rotterdam prompted Vim Buitedijk, the tournament director, to declare that enough was enough.

Gambill, by contrast, fulfilled his engagement yesterday before looking ahead to the United States' Davis Cup tie with Great Britain in April. Unlike Pete Sampras, Andre Agassi and Michael Chang, his compatriots, Gambill said that he could never envisage making himself unavailable for selection, whatever the circumstances. That trio's absence from the United States' semi-final line-up against Italy last year prompted severe criticism of the team by the local media.

"I get sick of hearing about the B-team," Gambill said. "The team we pick is the A-team, whoever ends up playing." He also dismissed as "ridiculous" the idea that world ranking points should be assigned to Davis Cup rubbers. "It would be like giving out money instead of gold medals at the Olympics," he said. "Players play because they love the game and want to play for their country."

Gambill, 21, is plainly itching to be chosen for the tie in Birmingham. "I hope the atmosphere is hostile," he said. "That is the advantage of a home tie. It doesn't matter if the crowd is for me or against me. It is just very exciting to play in situations like that."

Goran Ivanisevic, who can create a hostile atmosphere all on his own, was the Battersea tournament's first seed to fall. The Croat, seeded No 7, became increasingly fractious as he succumbed to the withering groundstrokes of Hicham Arazi, of Morocco. Arazi triumphed 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 and next faces the winner of the match between Tim Henman and Jan Kroslak, who were due to play last night.


Full stretch: Richard Krajicek, of Holland, on his way to a 6-3, 6-4 victory over Nicolas Kiefer, of Germany, at Battersea yesterday. Photograph: Alex Livesey

BECKER'S WITHDRAWAL SYMPTOMS

Doha 98: withdrew before second-round match with a pulled stomach muscle.

Scottsdale 98: withdrew before playing a match with an injured back.

Lipton 98: withdrew before playing a match with influenza.

Doha 99: withdrew before event citing security problems.

Rotterdam 99: withdrew before event with ankle injury.

London 99: withdrew with stomach virus.

SNOOKER

Taylor may take cue to leave centre stage at Derby

By Phil Yates

DENNIS TAYLOR, responsible for snooker's best remembered moment when he defeated Steve Davis 18-17 on the black in the final of the 1985 world championship, could be making his last televised appearance as a tournament player today.

Taylor, who turned 50 last month, was selected — with Davis, Jimmy White and Marco Fu — as one of the four sponsor's wild-card invitees for the 12-man Liverpool Victoria Charity Challenge at the Assembly Rooms in Derby. Having announced his intention to retire from competition at the end of the season, Taylor's playing swansong in front of the cameras will come either at Derby or, if he can negotiate three world championship qualifying rounds, at the Crucible in April.

The winner in Derby will earn £100,000 for his nominated charity and £30,000 himself. Taylor, who last figured in a final when he unexpectedly battled through to the climax of the inaugural Charity Challenge in 1995, will represent the National Carers Association. He meets Alan McManus for the right to provide the quarter-final opposition to Ronnie O'Sullivan.

John Higgins, the titleholder, awaits Peter Ebdon or Davis in the quarter-finals, while Stephen Hendry, the winner in 1995 and 1997, will play John Parrott or Jimmy White in the quarter-finals.

Davis, White, Stephen Lee, who won the Grand Prix in October, and, most surprisingly, Michael Judge have been awarded wild cards for the Benson and Hedges Irish Masters at Goffs, Co Kildare, at the end of March.

Stuart Bingham, from Basildon, won the third of the season's four UK Tour events in Swindon yesterday. Bingham, who compiled a maximum break in the qualifying phase, beat Matthew Couch, of Scunthorpe, 6-1 in the final.


Taylor: retiring

Ramesh makes his mark

COLOMBO (first day of five; Sri Lanka won toss): India have scored 351 for three wickets against Sri Lanka

SADAGOPAN Ramesh struck his maiden Test century and Rahul Dravid also scored a hundred as India enjoyed a profitable opening day against Sri Lanka in their Asian Test Championship match in Colombo.

Ramesh, who hit 143, shared a second-wicket stand of 232 with Dravid, who made 107, after Ramesh's opening partner, Vangipurappu Laxman, had been dismissed for 11 with the total on 20. His edge into the slips was juggled among the fielders before being grasped by Aravinda de Silva to give Ruchira Perera a wicket on his Test debut.

Ramesh, who is playing in his fourth Test, hit 18 fours during an innings which lasted for 317 minutes and Dravid's hundred included 12 fours. Their partnership was the best for India's second wicket against Sri Lanka, surpassing the 173 between Sunil Gavaskar and Dilip Vengsarkar in the inaugural Test between the countries in Madras in 1982.

That Sri Lanka had to endure such a hard day in the field was their own fault because Ranatunga, encouraged by a tinge of green in the pitch, gave India first innings. The fielding became sloppy as it became obvious that conditions were, in fact, ideal for batting.

The second-wicket stand ended when Ramesh, who had hit Perera for three fours in one over soon after passing his century, lifted a drive against Jayawardene and was caught by Ranatunga at short extra cover.

The Sri Lanka captain also held a catch in the gully to send back Dravid off the bowling of Hathurusinghe.

Ominously for Sri Lanka, Tendulkar also looks set for a big score after enlivening the final hour with some glorious strokes as he moved to 53 not out, the new ball, taken at 289 for three serving only to increase the scoring rate.

Ashish Nehra, a fast-medium bowler, was given his Test debut by India, who were beaten by 46 runs by Pakistan in Calcutta last week in the match which opened the championship. Sri Lanka will meet Pakistan in Lahore in a match starting on March 4, and the final will be played in Dhaka eight days later.

Warne got off lightly

SHANE WARNE and Mark Waugh, the Australia players, should have been suspended and not just fined, because of their involvement with an Indian bookmaker, the report of the official inquiry stated yesterday.

The report also castigated the Australian Cricket Board (ACB) for failing to publicise the fines on the players, who admitted receiving money for match and weather reports four years ago.

However, the two-month investigation by a senior lawyer, commissioned by the ACB, found no evidence of match-fixing.

The lawyer ruled out further charges against the pair, who are on tour in the West Indies, because the offences occurred in 1995.

England's missed chance

From Thrasy Petropoulos in Johannesburg

ALI BACHER, the managing director of the United Cricket Board of South Africa (UCB), revealed yesterday that his country would have been willing to host a full tour of the England A team this winter, and accepted all local expenditure, but his board was never asked by the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB).

"The national team is away so the A team players are in the country and they would all be available to play against England," Bacher said. "Had they (the ECB) come back to us for a six-week tour in February/March, there is no reason why we would not have said yes. But they never came back to us.

"They phoned me to say that they were going to Zimbabwe as a fait accompli. They just asked us if they could then have a couple of games in South Africa at the end of the tour. If England want a full A tour here, we would be happy to host them and pay for it."

When the itinerary of the tour was finalised, the ECB felt it necessary to include a two-week leg in South Africa, with two first-class matches, after the six-week stay in Zimbabwe, and agreed to pay most of the costs, expenses usually undertaken by the host nation's board.

Tim Lamb, the chief executive of the ECB, said during a visit to Harare last week that A tours cost the board an estimated £350,000 a year. Only match expenses, however, are being funded by the UCB. "It would have cost us R250,000 (about £28,000) and with no gate or television income for just the two matches, my board could not justify it," Bacher said. "At the end of the day we were helping England."

Cricketing reasons alone would have been enough to favour South Africa as the principal venue for the A tour, with Zimbabwe being visited for a shorter, additional leg. The rains that ruined the first half of the stay in Zimbabwe added further irony to Bacher's comments.

The first of England A's matches here begins today, against Gauteng at the Wanderers ground. Mal Loye, the Northamptonshire batsman, having played in all but the second warm-up match of the tour in Harare, has been rested and Steve Harmison is being saved for the five-day match against the President's XI next week.

FOR THE RECORD

CRICKET

Asian Test championship

Sri Lanka v India

COLOMBO (first day of five, Sri Lanka won toss): India have scored 351 for three wickets against Sri Lanka

INDIA: First innings

S Ramesh c Ranatunga b Jayawardene	143
V V S Laxman c De Silva b Perera	11
R Dravid c Ranatunga b Hathurusinghe	107
S R Tendulkar not out	53
*M Azharuddin not out	19
Extras (b 5, lb 4, nb 12)	18
Total (3 wkts)	351

S C Ganguly, † N R Mongia, A Kumble, H Singh, B K V Prasad and A Nehra to bat.

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-20, 2-252, 3-288

BOWLING: Vaas 22-4-70-1, Perera 19-2-102-1, Upashantha 17-0-68-0, Hathurusinghe 13-2-38-1, Arnold 13-1-48-0, Jayawardene 6-1-18-1.

SRI LANKA: R P Arnold, M S Atapattu, P A de Silva, D P M D Jayawardene, *A Ranatunga, H P Tillekeratne, † R S Kaluwitharana, W P U C J Vaas, U C Hathurusingha, R L Perera, K E A Upashantha.

Umpires: R E Koertzen (South Africa) and R B Tiffin (Zimbabwe).

TOUR MATCHES: Antigua (second day of three): Australians 156 (G S Blewett 52, R Hinds 4-23) and 176-3; West Indies Board XI 55 (A C Dale 7-24). Hamilton (final day of three): South Africans 407-4 dec and 200-5 dec; Northern Districts 308-8 dec and 120-3. Match drawn

BASKETBALL

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION (NBA): Washington 80 Miami 96; Detroit 106 Toronto 80, New York 82 New Jersey 74, Houston 98 Seattle 86, Chicago 88 Milwaukee 90; Dallas 89 Atlanta 85, Los Angeles Clippers 89 Golden State 94, Vancouver 93 Los Angeles Lakers 83.

CAMBRIDGE LENT RACES

MEN: First division: Caius bpd Downing, Jesus bpd Churchill; Christ's bpd Trinity Hall; Emmanuel bpd Pembroke; Robinson bpd Queens'; Clare bpd Girton, Selwyn over bpd LMBC II. Third division: CCAT bpd Clare II; Emmanuel II bpd Fitzwilliam II, Wolfson bpd Peterhouse II, Selwyn II bpd Magdalene II; Robinson II bpd 1st and 3rd Trinity III, Girton II bpd Downing III; Jesus III bpd Hughes Hall, Darwin bpd Corpus Christi II. Fourth division: Queens' III bpd Clare Hall, LMBC IV bpd Christ's III, Caius III bpd Clare III, 1st and 3rd Trinity IV bpd Trinity Hall III, St Catharine's II bpd Churchill II, CCAT II bpd St Edmund's House, Caius IV bpd LMBC V. Women: First division: Trinity Hall bpd Emmanuel, Pembroke bpd Queens'; Newnham bpd LMBC, 1st and 3rd Trinity bpd St Catharine's, New Hall bpd Clare, Caius bpd CCAT. Third division: Queens' II bpd Clare Hall; Homerton II bpd CCAT II, Churchill II bpd 1st and 3rd Trinity II; The Vet School bpd Selwyn II, Pembroke II bpd Downing II; Clare II bpd Caius II

SNOW REPORTS

	Depth (cm) L	U	Piste	Conditions Runs to Resort	Off/p	Weather (5pm)	°C	Last snow
Austria								
Kitzbühel	100	240	Good	Some	Powder	Snow	2	24/2
Obergurgl	110	310	Good	Open	Powder	Snow	-1	24/2
Sölf	90	230	Good	Open	Powder	Fair	0	24/2
Canada								
Lake Louise	146	168	Good	Open	Powder	Cloud	-3	24/2
France								
Alpe d'Huez	187	300	Good	Open	Heavy	Snow	0	24/2
Argentiere	120	320	Good	Some	Powder	Snow	-2	24/2
Avoriaz	350	370	Good	Open	Powder	Snow	-2	24/2
Flaine	220	615	Good	Closed	Powder	Snow	-1	24/2
La Clusaz	130	340	Good	Open	Powder	Cloud	-4	24/2
La Plagne	225	370	Good	Open	Powder	Snow	-11	24/2
La Tania	180	250	Good	Open	Powder	Snow	-2	24/2
Megève	160	300	Good	Open	Powder	Snow	-8	24/2
Meribel	110	280	Good	Open	Powder	Snow	-1	24/2
Tignes	210	314	Good	Open	Powder	Snow	-12	24/2
Val Thorens	210	290	Good	Open	Powder	Cloud	-9	24/2
Val d'Isère	148	320	Good	Open	Powder	Snow	-3	24/2
Italy								
Cervinia	150	220	Good	Closed	Powder	Cloud	-6	23/2
Cortina	50	65	Good	Open	Powder	Sun	-15	23/2
Livigno	83	188	Good	Open	Powder	Snow	-1	24/2
M di Campiglio	50	100	Hard	Icy	Varied	Fair	4	23/2
Switzerland								
Crans Montana	150	330	Good	Open	Powder	Snow	-2	24/2
Davos	220	335	Good	Open	Powder	Snow	-9	24/2
Grindelwald	100	300	Good	Closed	Powder	Cloud	-3	23/2
Klosters	220	335	Good	Closed	Powder	Snow	-4	24/2
Saas Fee	120	400	Good	Closed	Powder	Snow	-5	24/2
St Moritz	90	160	Good	Open	Powder	Cloud	-5	23/2
Verbier	140	280	Good	Closed	Heavy	Cloud	8	24/2
Villars	100	350	Good	Open	Powder	Cloud	-6	24/2
Zermatt	125	250	Good	Open	Powder	Snow	-2	24/2
United States								
Aspen	138	168	Good	Open	Powder	Sun	3	22/2
Deer Valley	225	233	Good	Open	Powder	Fair	-3	23/2

L = lower slopes, U = upper slopes. http://www.skiclub.co.uk

FOOTBALL

Tuesday's late results

FA CUP: Fifth round: Arsenal 2 Sheff Utd 1

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE: Second division: Bristol Rovers 0 Gillingham 1, Fulham 3 Reading 1; Luton 0 Notts County 1, Northampton 0 Walsall 1, Preston 5 Lincoln City 0. Third division: Plymouth 2 Chester 0; Swansea 1 Mansfield 0

AUTO WINDSCREENS SHIELD: Northern section, quarter-final: Rochdale 2 Halifax 1 (aet, 1-1 after 90min; Rochdale win on golden goal).

NATIONWIDE CONFERENCE: Doncaster 2 Telford 1, Hayes 2 Stevenage 2; Kingstonian 3 Leek Town 0; Rushden and Diamonds 3 Southport 1

SCOTTISH LEAGUE: First division: Airdrie 0 St Mirren 3. Third division: Albion 1 Cowdenbeath 1, Stenhousemuir 3 Montrose 1.

ENDSLEIGH CHALLENGE TROPHY: Quarter-finals: Farnborough 4 Woking 3, Hereford 2 Morecambe 3 (aet, 2-2 after 90min)

UNIBOND LEAGUE: Premier division: Runcorn 2 Bamber Bridge 2, Emley 1 Frickley 1. First division: Droylsden 3 Great Harwood 0; Flixton 2 Ashton United 0

DR MARTENS LEAGUE: Premier division: Crawley 1 Dorchester 1; Grantham 3 Gresley 1; Hastings 1 Burton 4; Rothwell 0 King's Lynn 2. Midland division: Bedworth 0 Blakenall 1; Clevedon 2 Newport AFC 1, Hinckley 5 Moor Green 1. Southern division: Andover 3 Witney 1; Brackley 0 Havant and Waterlooville 2; Cirencester 2 Fisher 1, Erith and Belvedere 0 Chelmsford 2. League Cup: Fourth round: Stourbridge 0 Boston 2

RYMAN LEAGUE: Premier division: Basingstoke 2 Gravesend and Northfleet 2, Dulwich 2 St Albans 2; Hampton 0 Aylesbury 0, Sutton United 5 Walton and Hersham 0. First division: Berkhamsted 1 Hitchin 2, Canvey Island 3 Yeading 1, Oxford City 2 Molesey 1, Wealdstone 4 Worthing 1; Whyteleafe 1 Grays 0. Second division: Barking 1 Hungerford 0; Bedford Town 4 Wokingham 1, Hertford 0 Harlow 2; Marlow 2 Northwood 0, Wivenhoe 1 Thame 3. Third division: Cheshunt 2 Wingate and Finchley 2; Croydon 0 Aveley 0; Dorking 2 Ware 5, Egham 1 East Thurrock 1; Hornchurch 3 Epsom and Ewell 0; Tilbury 0 Ford Utd 1

IRISH LEAGUE: Coca-Cola cup: Quarter-final: Carrick 2 Ards 1

BANKS'S BREWERY LEAGUE: Premier division: Bandon 4 Star 0; Walsall Wood 1 Darlaston 2; Wolverhampton Casuals 0 Tividale 2

BASS IRISH CUP: Sixth round: Lurgan Celtic 0 Portadown 3

SOUTHERN JUNIOR FLOODLIT CUP: First round: Brighton 4 Gillingham 2

COURAGE COMBINED COUNTIES LEAGUE: Premier division: Cobham 1 Bedfont 1; Cove 0 Reading 4; Farnham 0 Chipstead 1; Godalming and Guildford 0 Ash 0; Walton Casuals 1 Merstham 0

NORTHERN COUNTIES EAST LEAGUE: Premier division: Arnold 4 Liversedge 0; Ossett Town 3 Eccleshill 2, Staveley MW 2 Ossett Albion 1

NORTH WESTERN TRAINS LEAGUE: First division: Glossop North End 2 Newcastle Town 3; Prescot Cables 2 Bootle 2. Floodlit Trophy: Semi-final, first leg: Kidsgrove Ath 2 Curzon Ashton 1

ISTHMIAN LEAGUE CUP: Second round: Chesham 3 Dagenham and Redbridge 1. Third round: Maidenhead 4 Slough 2.

SCREWFIX DIRECT LEAGUE: Premier division: Barnstaple 5 Bridport 1; Bristol Manor Farm 0 Bridgwater 3, Melksham 4 Bishop Sutton 0; Paulton 1 Mangotsfield 1

ARNOTT INSURANCE NORTHERN LEAGUE CUP: Fourth round: South Shields 2 Consett 1.

ENDSLEIGH INSURANCE MIDLAND COMBINATION: Premier division: Alveston 0 Southam 0; GPT 0 Alvechurch 5

JEWSON LEAGUE: Premier division: Diss 4 Ely 2; Harwich and Parkeston 0 Sudbury Town 1, Newmarket 3 Lowestoft 0. League Cup: Semi-final: Sudbury Wanderers 2 Clacton 1.

JEWSON WESSEX LEAGUE: First division: AFC Newbury 5 Fareham 1, Bemerton Heath Harlequins 1 Brockenhurst 0. League Cup: Second round, second leg: Wimborne 0 Lymington and New Milton 2 (Lymington win 4-0 on agg)

HOCKEY

INTERNATIONAL MATCH (in Lahore): Pakistan 2 India 3 (Pakistan win series 6-3)

ICE HOCKEY

SEKONDA SUPERLEAGUE: Ayr Scottish Eagles 5 Cardiff Devils 4 (OT)

NATIONAL LEAGUE (NHL): Boston 5 Ottawa 2; Nashville 3 Dallas 4; Colorado 4 Vancouver 4 (OT)

NETBALL

INTERNATIONAL MATCH: England 57 South Africa 54 (at MEN Arena, Manchester)

RUGBY UNION

WELSH LEAGUE: Premier division: Neath 20 Ebbw Vale 22.

FIXTURES

FOOTBALL

Kick-off 7.30 unless stated

RYMAN LEAGUE: Second division: Banstead v Met Police. Vandanel Trophy: Third round: Hertford v Windsor and Eton (7.45), Marlow v Egham (7.45); Thame Utd v Southall (7.45)

AVON INSURANCE COMBINATION: First division: Crystal Palace v Ipswich.

PONTIN'S LEAGUE: Second division: Huddersfield v Notts County (7.0)

FAI HARP NATIONAL LEAGUE: Premier division: Dundalk v Shamrock (7.45)

MINERVA SPARTAN SOUTH MIDLANDS LEAGUE: Premier division: Barkingside v St Margaretsbury (7.45), Haringey v Potters Bar Town (7.45); Welwyn Garden v Beaconsfield Sycob (7.45).

OTHER SPORT

HOCKEY: Men's matches: Midlands President's XI v English Universities (at Birmingham Univ, 7.30), England Under-18 v Cambridge University (at Southgate, 2.30)

ICE HOCKEY: Sekonda Superleague: London Knights v Bracknell Bees (7.0); Nottingham Panthers v Manchester Storm (7.30)

SQUASH

SRA NATIONAL LEAGUE: Group A: UNW Northumberland 3 TSM Duffield 2, Capital One Nottingham 4 Hallamshire 1. Group B: Edgbaston Priory 2 Potters Bar 3; Bishop's Stortford 4 UK Packaging 1. Group C: Aspect Chichester 5 UWIC Cardiff 0, Devon and Exeter 3 UniS Guildford 2. League positions: Group A: 1, Capital One Nottingham 29pts; 2, UNW Northumberland 27; 3, Hallamshire 27; 4, TSM Duffield 23; 5, Manchester Northern 20. Group B: 1, UK Packaging 36pts; 2, Potters Bar 29; 3, Edgbaston Priory 25; 4, Bishop's Stortford 22; 5, Ashursts Loughborough 14. Group C: 1, UniS Guildford 39pts; 2, Aspect Chichester 30; 3, Devon and Exeter 29; 4, Lee-on-Solent 19; 5, UWIC Cardiff 9

NATIONAL SUPER LEAGUE: Dunraven Windows Maesteg 2 Ellis Stockbrokers Lingfield 1 (A Gough lost to P Johnson 9-2, 4-9, 7-9, 4-9; J White bt T Hands 9-4, 6-9, 9-7, 8-10, 9-7; D Evans bt T Garner 9-3, 9-5, 9-6). League positions: 1, Ellis Stockbrokers Lingfield 34pts; 2, Dunraven Windows Maesteg 31; 3, Halifax Insurance 18; 4, Le Sport Colwyn Bay 10

TENNIS

BATTERSEA PARK: Guardian Direct Cup: Singles: First round: Y Kafelnikov (Russ) bt M Gustafsson (Swe) 6-2, 3-6, 6-3; G Rusedski (GB) bt G Pozzi (It) 6-2, 6-1; D Sanguinetti (It) bt J M Gambill (US) 6-4, 6-4. Second round: T Enqvist (Swe) bt D Prinosil (Ger) 6-4, 7-5; H Arazi (Mor) bt G Ivanisevic (Cro) 3-6, 6-3, 6-4; R Krajicek (Holl) bt N Kiefer (Ger) 6-3, 6-4. Doubles: First round: G Ivanisevic (Cro) and Kiefer bt B Becker (Ger) and D Prinosil (Ger) 6-3, 5-7, 7-5; Kafelnikov and D Vacek (Cz) bt N Kulti (Swe) and D MacPherson (Aus) 4-6, 6-3, 7-6; D Adams (SA) and J de Jager (SA) bt W Arthurs (Aus) and J Tarango (US) 7-5, 6-4

PARIS INDOOR OPEN: First round: J Halard-Decugis (Fr) bt M-A Vento (Ven) 6-4, 6-0; S Nacuk (Yug) bt S Pitkowski (Fr) 6-4, 2-6, 7-6; N Dechy (Fr) bt S Testud (Fr) 7-5, 6-2; I Majoli (Cro) bt E Tatarkova (Ukr) 7-5, 6-2; V Ruano-Pascual (Sp) bt A Sugiyama (Japan) 6-1, 3-6, 6-1; K Habsudova (Slovakia) bt E Loit (Fr) 3-6, 6-4, 6-1; S Kleinova (Cz) bt A Fusai (Fr) 6-2, 2-6, 6-0; E Likhovtseva (Russ) bt S Appelmans (Bel) 7-6, 6-3. Second round: S Williams (US) bt N Tauziat (Fr) 6-1, 6-4; M Hingis (Swit) bt Nacuk 6-1, 6-1

OKLAHOMA CITY: Superthrift Classic: First round: A Coetzer (SA) bt N Miyagi (Japan) 4-6, 7-6, 6-4; L Osterloh (US) bt L Raymond (US) 2-6, 6-2, 6-2; C Rubin (US) bt S Smith (GB) 6-3, 7-6; C Black (Zim) bt T Snyder (US) 6-3, 6-2; A Dechaume-Balleret (Fr) bt A Kremer (Lux) 7-5, 6-4; M Washington (US) bt C Cristea (Rom) 7-6, 6-4; N Pratt (Aus) bt M Shaughnessy (US) 6-3, 7-6; K Po (US) bt K Boogert (Holl) 6-4, 6-2

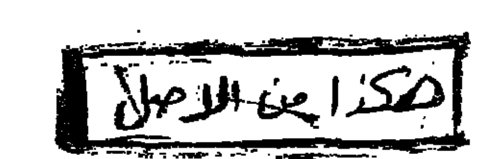
POOLS DIVIDENDS

BRITTENS: Treble chance: 23pts £1,026.30; 22 £7.90; 21 £1.75. Four draws: £9.50. Five aways: £5.70. Eight homes: £14.60

LITTLEWOODS: Treble chance: 23pts £32,539.85; 22 £270.20; 21 £20.25; 20 £5.00. Four draws: £15.55. Nine homes: £1,460.00. Five aways: £42.90. Half-time results: 23 £16,606.65

VERNONS: Treble chance: 23pts £11,459.90; 22 £160.50; 21 £22.30

ZETTERS: Treble chance: 23pts £1,505.00; 22 £15.20; 21 £2.00. Four aways: £2.20. Eight homes: £4.20. Four draws: £7.20. Easy six: £12.40. All-draws treble chance: 24 £177.50; 23 £1.75. Lucky numbers: 19 25 20 23 27 21.





Lunatic fringe: athletes perform handsprings and cartwheels during the 100 metres gymnastic dash, but will it catch on as an Olympic Games event?

Eccentric new sports that may have fringe benefits





Formation running, in which athletes run as a team joined by elastic, and the assisted high jump, feature at the Fringe Games

Any spectator who is feeling jaded at the same old events spinning round on the sporting calendar should keep an eye on a strange jamboree to be staged in New Zealand a week before the Olympic Games in Sydney next year.

It is not often that you can be in at the birth of new sports, or witness new events at existing sports meetings. Just occasionally, after some ferocious or eccentric lobbying, beach volleyball, synchronised swimming or ballroom dancing will creep into a games. But such "recreations" already exist and are merely seeking acceptance within the establishment of mainstream sport.

By contrast, in New Zealand, a remarkable man with the unlikely name of Burton Silver is toying with a completely new concept of "innovative sports and games" that will have most traditionalists spluttering with outrage. He wants to introduce the world to the delights of formation running, assisted high jumping and hurdling on bicycles. Silver's dream is to hold a regular international sporting festival, staged around the time of conventional world sporting events, to be known as the Fringe Games. His inaugural games, which he says will be televised, will take place in the QEII Park in Christchurch, from September 8-11, 2000.

"These are not silly games, they will be highly competitive," Silver said. "There is a hunger for new and exciting events. People are going to be able to watch formation running, the 100 metres slalom and mechanized running for the first time, plus a host of other sports that have never been seen before."

Lateral — or sideways — running, synchronized running with the teams harnessed together by tough elastic cords, high jumps where a partner helps to heave you over the bar, long jumps in which hand-held weights are used to extend distance, a gymnastic 100 metres sprint involving a series of cartwheels and hand-springs, backwards running, and a freestyle ball throw are some of the bizarre events planned by Silver.

"Many people don't realise that athletes are constrained by traditional rules," he said. "There are ways of jumping higher or cycling faster. The Fringe Games will allow us to celebrate our true potential by removing such constraints and we confidently expect to see many records set at these games."

Cycling events will be unrestricted by rules covering the construction of bikes, and innovations such as the outlawed streamlined bike built by the Graeme Obree, the Scottish rider, will be welcomed.

A 400 metres hurdles race, in which cyclists will have to jump ten hurdles of varying height, promises plenty of action. Other events include a unicycle 100 metres and synchronised cycling.

Silver said that the Fringe Games are based on the belief that the creation of the new in sport is as important as the celebration of the old — that experimenting with sport challenges human ingenuity and reinvigorates the spirit.

"There is great value in celebrating tradition, and long may it continue. But that shouldn't stop us from creating new traditions or changing existing ones." Coincidentally, Silver believes that there are unlikely to be any problems with drugs in his games. "Our events will encourage a greater concentration on technique, rather than the current obsession with the development of physique."

'These are not silly games and they will be highly competitive'

You will probably be able to get a bet on whether the man is simply mad or a great sporting visionary, and whether his games will ever take off. It is now well over a century since we saw his like. Then a self-confident generation of Victorian gentlemen knocked into shape the sports we have enjoyed ever since. Their raw material was largely games with long pedigrees that began in ancient times. They were modernisers and codifiers of sport rather than inventors.

But there is no logical reason why great sports should not grow from an idea, an inventive spark or an experiment. No one, for instance, would today dismiss basketball as a fringe sport. But when it first appeared it would have been readily recognised by Silver as fit for inclusion in his Fringe Games.

Basketball was the result of an assignment posed by a physical education teacher in December 1891 at a YMCA training college in Springfield, Massachusetts. A Canadian student, James Naismith, rose to the challenge of devising an active indoor winter game that would prove attractive to young men. He typed up a rudimentary set of rules, had a janitor nail up peach baskets along the railing at each end of the gym, and invited his fellow students to toss a ball into the baskets. The invented fringe sport caught on immediately.

An even crazier idea for an event, considered at the time to be outrageously beyond the bounds of normal sporting activity, has since become one of the most popular mass-participation sports in the world.

In June 1894 Michel Breal, a classical philologist, wrote to his friend and fellow Frenchman, Baron Pierre de Coubertin, suggesting a new race for his 1896 Athens Olympics. Breal, trying to establish a connection to the ancient Greek games, proposed an impossibly long endurance run of 40 kilometres or more, even though there was no such footrace in ancient Greece.

It was, of course, the marathon — surely an event that even Burton Silver would consider to be way beyond the fringe.

JOHN BRYANT

WORD-WATCHING

Answers from page 50

LATIMER
(b) An interpreter. A corruption of the Old French *Latinier* a Latinist.

MAIZENA
(a) Maize-starch prepared for use as food. Arbitrarily from *maize*.

MYGALE
(b) The shrew-mouse. Late Latin borrowed from the Greek. "The sacred animal of Buto is said to have been the mygale or shrew-mouse."

LAMBEAU
(a) A strip or fillet hanging from a head-dress or garment. Connected with *label*. In Heraldry, one of the dependent points of a label. "At his cappe hand certaine Lambeaux much like unto a Bishops Miter."

SOLUTION TO WINNING MOVE
1 ... Nf3+! 2 gxf3 Qh3 and the white position collapses due to the mate threat on h2.

SQUASH

Martin seals Duffield's fate

By Colin MacQuillan

AN EXTRAORDINARY resurgence by Jane Martin from the edge of defeat to Cassandra Jackman may have put TSM Duffield out of the play-offs for the SRA National League championship next month. Martin, of UNW Northumberland, beat Jackman, the British champion, 8-10, 3-9, 9-7, 9-7, 9-1 in a 77-minute fifth-string rubber.

Martin, 26, who stands ten places behind Jackman at No 14 in the world rankings, was trounced for just six points when they met in a 38-minute national championship semi-final earlier this month in Manchester. On her home courts at the Northumberland club in Newcastle, however, Martin fought back from 3-7 down in the third game to add the women's string to the victories of Derek Ryan and James Willstrop.

Ryan beat Chris Walker and the 15-year-old Willstrop got the better of Bryan Beeson, the 38-year-old former national champion, 15-5 in the fifth game.

The 3-2 result lifted Northumberland into second place in group A. Duffield, the champions, dropped to fourth place, with only the top two teams in each group guaranteed a play-off place.

With only the two highest-scoring third-placed teams qualifying for quarter-final places, Duffield have only one match — against Manchester Northern, the bottom-placed team, on March 9 — in which to displace Hallamshire from third in group A. Hallamshire lost their last match of group play, 4-1 to the Capital One squad, in Nottingham.

TELEVISION CHOICE

Getting hot in the kitchen

Ramsay's Boiling Point
Channel 4, 9pm

The first of a five-part series following the fortunes of the London chef Gordon Ramsay over eight months, from the date of his walkout from Aubergine, one of the capital's top eating places, through the opening of his own solo venture and into the struggle to get his third Michelin star. Ramsay is as well known for his explosive temper, foul language under pressure and robust attitude to discipline in the kitchen as for his culinary expertise. Tonight's opener has plenty of all of these, especially when another television company secretly films him for a series about bullying bosses. There isn't, however, very much about the food, for which customers happily part with up to £100 a head. What is clear is that even staff who have been dismissed are unstinting in their admiration of his professional skills, if not his man-management.

The temperature is rising for the chef in *Ramsay's Boiling Point* (Channel 4, 9pm)

Harbour Lights
BBC1, 8pm

Heartbeat on Sea, or Heartboat, as we may call it, continues to sail a safe, predictable but well-plotted course. Nick Berry, as the "enigmatic" harbourmaster, diplomatically contrives to be all things to all men (and women), while Edward Canfor-Dumas's script this week weaves together a reasonably dramatic tale of sea cadets in peril because of their drunken, bullying former Chief Petty Officer leader (Nicholas Ball, selflessly showing his age) and the continuing plotlines about the residents of the seaside town of Bridehaven. These include a budding romance between the harbourmaster and a local policewoman (Tina Hobley).

Wheeler Dealers
BBC2, 8.30pm

Tonight two teams of three attempt to turn £1,000 into at least £1,001 in five days — they will be able to keep any profit — by buying and selling cars and motorbikes. While one trio put their faith and money into mopeds which have seen service in pizza deliveries, the others assemble a mini-fleet of bottom-of-the-range second-hand cars. The nuts and bolts, so to speak, of their efforts are less fascinating than the conflicts and conspiracies within the groups and the characters whom they encounter, as well as the incidental lore which you can pick up along the way — well, did you know anything about milky gaskets before you watched this?.

Horizon: Sudden Death
BBC2, 9.30pm

This film tells an extraordinary and sometimes heartbreaking story. Of the tens of thousands of infant deaths which occur every year, many have been attributed to apnoea, or interrupted breathing. Alfred Steinschneider, a paediatrician, developed the theory of apnoea in 1972 after studying a family in which five babies died in infancy. Huge amounts of money were spent investigating the theory, millions of baby monitors were made and sold to anxious parents. But then a forensic pathologist and a district attorney re-examined Steinschneider's original study. It seemed there was another explanation for the family's loss, and in 1995 the mother was convicted of murdering all five of her babies.

Tony Patrick

RADIO CHOICE

The Material World
Radio 4, 4.30pm

I am always amazed at the mixed reactions that this programme produces in listeners. Some write to tell me it is unmissable, others to complain that it is made eminently missable by the presenter, Trevor Phillips. The latter response is mystifying, because I think Phillips is one of the best presenters on radio. Perhaps the anti-Phillips brigade will give the programme another chance today: the subject is acupuncture and in particular the efforts that science is making to find out why the practice works.

Crossing Continents
Radio 4, 11.00am

Return of the series that seeks to explain others to ourselves, a laudable objective usually carried out in this programme with calm intelligence. Today's is a fascinating look at Iran, which is holding municipal elections tomorrow. The fact that any elections are taking place will surprise many in the West but Tim Whewell's report shows that, with the second generation of post-revolutionary leaders in place, much else is changing in Iran.

Peter Barnard

RADIO 1 (BBC)

6.30am Scott Mills **9.00** Simon Mayo **12.00pm** Jo Whiley **2.00** Mark Radcliffe **4.00** Chris Moyles **5.45** Newsbeat **6.00** Dave Pearce **8.00** Steve Lamacq: The Evening Session **10.00** Trade Update **10.10** John Peel. With guest P.J. Harvey **12.00am** Andy Kershaw **2.00** Emma B **4.00** Clive Warren

RADIO 2 (BBC)

6.00am Sarah Kennedy **7.30** Wake Up to Wogan **9.30** Ken Bruce **12.00pm** John Inverdale **2.00** Ed Stewart **5.05** Johnnie Walker **7.00** David Allan **8.00** Paul Jones **9.00** Punt and Dennis: It's Been a Bad Week (3/6) **9.30** Comedy Showcase: Eat This (6/7) **10.00** Melly Talks Jazz **10.30** Richard Allinson **12.00am** Lynn Parsons **3.00** Alex Lester

TALK RADIO

6.00am The Big Boys Breakfast **9.00** Scott Chisholm **12.00pm** My Favourite Year **1.00** Anna Raeburn **3.00** Peter Deeley **5.00** The SportZone **7.00** One to One with Andy Gray **8.00** James Whale **1.00am** Ian Collins and the Creatures of the Night

BBC WORLD SERVICE

5.00am The World Today **7.00** World News **7.15** Outlook **7.55** My Century **8.00** World News **8.05** From Our Own Correspondent **8.20** Off the Shelf: Captain Corelli's Mandolin **8.35** The Works **9.00** World News **9.05** Network **9.20** Andy Kershaw's World of Music **9.50** Sports Round-Up **10.00** Newsdesk **10.30** Britain Today **10.45** Performance **11.00** Newsdesk **11.30** Assignment **12.00pm** World News **12.05** Outlook **12.45** Sports Round-Up **1.00** Newshour **2.00** World News **2.05** The Works **2.30** Meridian Books **3.00** World News **3.05** Sports Round-Up **3.15** Westway **3.30** The Greenfield Collection **4.00** World News **4.15** Insight **4.30** The Music Studio **4.45** The Lab **5.00** Europe Today **5.30** World Business Report **5.45** Sports Round-Up **6.00** World News **6.15** Britain Today **6.30** Assignment **7.00** World News **7.05** The Works **7.30** From Our Own Correspondent **7.45** Off the Shelf, Captain Corelli's Mandolin **8.00** Newshour **9.00** World News **9.05** World Business Report **9.20** Britain Today **9.30** Meridian Books **10.00** World News **10.15** Sports Round-Up **10.30** The Music Studio **10.45** The Lab **11.00** World News **11.05** Outlook **12.00am** The World Today **12.30** The Works **12.55** My Century **1.00** The World Today **1.30** Westway **1.45** Performance **2.00** The World Today **2.30** Fo cus on Faith **3.00** The World Today **3.20** Sports Round-Up **3.30** World Business Report

RADIO 3

6.00am On Air with Petroc Trelawny. Includes Sibelius (Night-Ride and Sunrise); Bach (Oboe d'amore Concerto in F minor, BWV1053)
9.00 Masterworks with Peter Hobday. Bizet (Carmen Suite No 1); Schubert (Piano Sonata in A minor, D845); Ravel (Introduction and Allegro); Mozart (Solemn Vespers in C, K339)
10.30 Artist of the Week: Pascal Roge
11.00 Sound Stories: Planets — Neptune
12.00pm Composer of the Week: Copland **1.00 The Radio 3 Lunchtime Concert** Louis Lortie, piano. Beethoven (Piano Sonatas: in A, Op 2 No 2, in D minor, Op 31 No 2, Tempest)
2.00 The BBC Orchestras BBC National Orchestra of Wales under Tadaaki Otaka and Mark Wigglesworth. Steven Isserlis, cello, Martin Roscoe, piano, Joan Rodgers, soprano, Neal Davies, bass. Tchaikovsky (Rococo Variations, original version), Mozart (Piano Concerto No 9 in E flat, K271); Shostakovich (Symphony No 14)
4.00 Ensemble Penny Gore introduces a sequence of Spanish dances devised and performed by the American violinist Kurt Nikkanen
4.45 Music Machine with Tommy Pearson
5.00 In Tune Sean Rafferty explores the life and work of Saint-Saens on the publication of a new biography
7.45 Performance on 3: Beyond Our Shores (Sounding the Century) Live from the Royal Concert Hall, Glasgow. Evelyn Glennie, percussion, Royal Scottish National Orchestra under Steuart Bedford. MacMillan (The Exorcism of Rio Sumpul); Sierra (Con madera, metal e cuero, first UK performance) **8.45** News from North Britain. The Thatched Roof, the Roadside Madonna and the Banjo. Written by Bill Duncan and read by Michael Mackenzie (4/5) **9.05** Concert, part two. Britten, arr Mitchell/Cooke (Suite, The Prince of the Pagodas)
10.00 Postscript: Doctors of Philosophy — Schopenhauer with Alain de Botton (4/5)
10.20 Liszt (Reminiscences of Don Juan). Performed by Ignaz Friedman, piano
10.45 Night Waves Paul Allen talks to the celebrated design historian Tanya Harrod about her book *The Crafts in Britain in the Twentieth Century*
11.30 Jazz Notes Alyn Shipton is joined by Dave Gelly for the latest jazz news
12.00am Composer of the Week: Dvorak (r)
1.00 Through the Night Includes **1.00** Monte Carlo PO under James de Preist. Emanuel Ax, piano. Berlioz (Overture: Le corsaire); Falla (The Three-Cornered Hat, Suites Nos 1 and 2), Chopin (Piano Concerto No 2 in F minor) **2.10** Vaughan Williams (Romance) **2.20** Reincken (Toccata in G minor) **2.30** Mozart (String Quartet in B flat, K458, Hunt) **3.00** Schools. Music Workshop **3.20** Let's Move! **3.40** Words Alive! **3.55** First Steps in Drama **4.10** Listen and Write **4.30** Radio Showcase **4.40** Check It Out

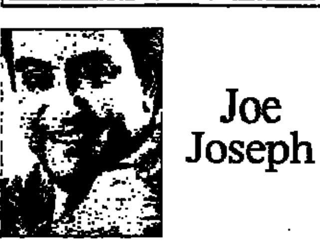
RADIO 4

5.35am Shipping Forecast **5.40 Inshore Forecast**
5.45 Prayer for the Day **5.47 Farming Today**
6.00 Today with James Naughtie and Sue MacGregor
8.35 (LW) Yesterday in Parliament Update on political developments
9.00 Melvyn Bragg: In Our Time **9.30 Q & A** Jez Nelson investigates whether computers could ever replace humans
9.45 (FM) Serial: The Spirit Wrestlers (4/5)
9.45 (LW) Daily Service
10.00 Woman's Hour with Jenni Murray
11.00 Crossing Continents New series. See Choice
11.30 Fat Chance **12.00 (LW) News Headlines; Shipping Forecast**
12.00pm (FM) News **12.04 You and Yours** Consumer news and investigations, presented by John Waite and Liz Barclay
1.00 The World at One with Nick Clarke
1.30 Open Country Richard Undge and Lindsay Cannon experience winter in the Highlands
2.00 The Archers Yesterday's edition (r)
2.15 Afternoon Play: Assassins — The Virgin Knife by David Pownall. The first of three plays probing the minds of history's most celebrated killers
3.00 Call You and Yours 0870 010 0444 Consumer justice programme, presented by Peter White
3.30 The Man with the Two-Stroke Engine Engineer Gordon Blair discusses his work in developing the two-stroke engine (r)
3.45 This Sceptred Isle Part 39 (r)
4.00 Law in Action The people of Leeds tackle case studies from the magistrates' courts. Marcel Berlins presents
4.30 The Material World See Choice
5.00 PM with Clare English and Chris Lowe
6.00 Six O'Clock News
6.30 Yes, Minister Comedy set in the corridors of power, with Paul Eddington (r)
7.00 The Archers
7.15 Front Row Arts magazine, with Francine Stock
7.45 The Cry of the Bittern Part nine of Tim Jackson's environmental drama.
8.00 On Tap: A History of Drinking Water How outbreaks of cholera in the 19th century prompted a series of sanitary reforms (2/3)
8.30 The Week in Westminster **9.00 Testbeds** Vanessa Collingridge explores technology's part in everyday life
9.30 Melvyn Bragg: In Our Time (r)
10.00 The World Tonight Presented by Robin Lustig
10.45 Book at Bedtime: Post Captain
11.00 Late Night on 4: The Way It Is Satire and sketches with Simon Evans, Tracy-Ann Oberman and Dave Lamb
11.30 (FM) A Good Read **11.30 (LW) Today in Parliament** Update from Westminster
12.00am News **12.30 The Late Book: Sam Peckinpah: If It Moves — Kill 'Em** Part four of David Weddle's biography
12.48 Shipping Forecast **1.00 As World Service**

FREQUENCY GUIDE. RADIO 1. FM 97.6-99.8 **RADIO 2.** FM 88.0-90.2. **RADIO 3.** FM 90.2-92.4. **RADIO 4.** FM 92.4-94.6; LW 198; MW 720. **RADIO 5 LIVE.** MW 693, 909. **WORLD SERVICE.** MW 648; LW 198 (12.45-5.55am). **CLASSIC FM.** FM 100-102. **VIRGIN RADIO.** FM 105.8; MW 1197, 1215. **TALK RADIO.** MW 1053, 1089.
Television and radio listings compiled by Ian Hughes, Rosemary Smith, Susan Thomson, Jane Gregory and John McNamara.

These boots were made for . . . all sorts

REVIEW



Joe Joseph

Although BBC2's *Trouble at the Top* is billed as a business documentary, its teachings are universal: you have to adapt to survive. Take the opening film of the new series, **The Kinky Boot Factory**, which traced Steve Pateman's efforts to refocus his family-run shoe factory in Northampton from a firm specialising in black brogues to a firm specialising in kinky boots for the men's fetish market.

Isn't this much the same journey that Tony Blair has made from old Labour to new Labour, replacing the sandal-wearers and the Saxone socialists with election-winners such as Jack "Boots" Cunningham, Gordon "Spike Heels" Brown, and Robin Cook with his red, crotch-length, patent leather boots, with integral whip holster? John Prescott, I should think, would be a pushover for Pateman's thigh-high leopard-skin number with five-inch stilettos.

One of the tenderest moments of Michele Kurland's film came when Steve — still struggling to decide on a new shoe line that might keep the business afloat in the face of cheap imports — took delivery of some American footwear which he thought might represent the firm's future. His now retired father, who had steered the company through 35 years of traditional brogues and court shoes, was looking on. Steve tore open the large cardboard parcel to reveal a colourful selection of men's crotch-length leather boots with spikes so long that they'd serve you reliably as crampons if you were planning to stroll up the Eiger soon.

"Believe it or not," Steve said excitedly to his Dad, "this style is in quite big demand, especially in Europe." Dad nodded thoughtfully, trying to calculate whether his son was making some kind of confession, or if he was just being hoaxed on *Candid Camera*. "Cross-dressers there have to get them two sizes up just to fit." But when Dad replied, "Yeah sure, sure", you knew it was going to be all right, that Dad was going to brave the future, whatever it might hold, his life's work was being turned upside down, yet he was willing to trust in his son. You suddenly appreciated that the love of a parent for his child is truly bottomless, even when that child is a grown man with a wife and child of his own, and a belated interest in patent leather.

You got the feeling that "...ve will never let the family firm go under. He has too much energy. He's unthwartable. When he can't afford a male model to pose for photos in his new *Divine Collection* of kinky boots, he shaves his legs and models them himself. When retailers dither about putting in orders for his new designs, he takes his boots directly to the customers at London's Erotica Fair in Olympia (which is also the first time he meets the men who actually wear thigh-length leather boots. Scary). When punters at the Düsseldorf Shoe Fair, the big diary date for anyone in the shoe business, ignore his stand, Steve flies in a Northampton girl to pose half naked in his boots and leather bra, after which — lo and behold! — buyers are drawn to his stand like low-life to a Jerry Springer audience. Professors of marketing at Harvard Business School can teach you plenty of innovative selling techniques, but you'll never go wrong with cleavage.

Ask Barry Dennis about cleavage and he'll tell you the exact same thing. Or he'll tell you something else. At any rate he'll tell you something, because Barry never stops talking for longer than it takes to eat his preferred dinner of steak, two eggs, plenty of chips, and six slices of buttered white bread. Barry's an on-course bookie, the Cockney star of last night's **Modern Times: Bookies Never Lose** (BBC2) — although trying to *find a bookie who'll admit as* much is like trying to find a farmer who'll admit that he's wealthy and happy. Business got so bad that on Derby Day, to attract punters to his poorly located pitch, Barry got his niece and one of her girlfriends to hover by his stand topless (though tastefully body-painted as a jockey and a footballer) and — lo and behold! — the punters arrived in droves.

Barry's the sort of documentary subject you'd think came straight from central casting if you didn't know that TV doesn't fake things like that. Robert Davis and Alastair Cook even made time in their entertaining and affectionate film to let us hear Barry's doorbell, which plays *Beautiful Dreamer*. "Easy game, bookmaking," said Barry from behind his steering wheel, speeding to yet another race meeting, "all you need is tickets and chalk. Change the prices, take money, and win. That's how easy the game is." This was black humour, of course; almost as black as the scene on Derby Day when Barry — lustily singing *Rule Britannia* as the Queen's limo passed by — was simultaneously counting a brick-thick wad of twenties in a manner which slapped his spittle-primed thumb against the Queen's face each time he peeled another note.

The eye-opening fact in **The Real Story of the Airtours Air Rage** (Channel 4) was not that the 12 Brits — the ones who were kicked off their Montego-bound plane three weeks ago at Norfolk, Virginia, because they were drunk — denied they'd been unruly. Nor was it that their unscheduled arrival was Norfolk's biggest news story for years. No, what struck you was the extraordinary hospitability of Americans. Hearing of their plight — stranded at Norfolk airport — Virginians telephoned the airport offering food, drink, and even their spare bedrooms. Would Britons have responded so generously? Tony Blair isn't that hospitable to Ken Livingstone, and he's in his own party.

BBC1

6.00am Business Breakfast (35019)
7.00 BBC Breakfast News (T) (71748)
9.00 Kilroy (T) (8656125)
9.45 The Vanessa Show (T) (4982800)
10.55 News; Weather (T) (6127564)
11.00 Change That (6137941)
11.25 Can't Cook, Won't Cook (T) (6034800)
11.55 News; Weather (T) (1397187)
12.00pm Call My Bluff (42187)
12.30 Wipeout (4865449)
12.55 The Weather Show (T) (48853651)
1.00 One O'Clock News (T) (74835)
1.30 Regional News; Weather (47582019)
1.40 Neighbours Madge gets a nasty surprise (T) (25461274)
2.05 Ironside The wheelchair-bound sleuth tracks a man forced to wear a bomb belt by a scheming criminal (r) (3518835)
2.55 Through the Keyhole (r) (T) (5862125)
3.25 Children's BBC: Playdays (6785854) **3.45** The All New Popeye Show (2679038) **3.55** Pocket Dragon Adventures (2668922) **4.05** Anthony Ant (6225564) **4.20** Home Farm Twins (6213729) **4.35** Short Change (5557019) **5.00** Newsround (2097187) **5.10** Grange Hill (6649729)
5.33 Rewind (T) (176835)
5.35 Neighbours Madge gets a nasty surprise (r) (T) (571090)
6.00 Six O'Clock News; Weather (T) (598)
6.30 Regional News Magazine (390)
7.00 Watchdog with Anne Robinson Consumer investigation show (T) (6125)
7.30 EastEnders Fears for Courtney's safety mount (T) (274)

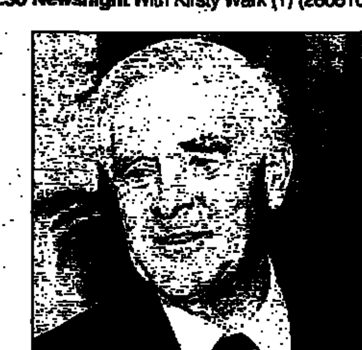


Nicholas Ball as the former Chief Petty Officer Alan Semple (8pm)

8.00 CHOICE **Harbour Lights** Mike is alarmed by the behaviour of a Falklands veteran whose bullying teaching methods are compounded by a strange attitude towards sailing. With Nick Berry and Nicholas Ball (T) (708800)
8.50 Points of View Des Lynam presents viewers' opinions (T) (739293)
9.00 Nine O'Clock News; Regional News; Weather (T) (3496)
9.30 Playing the Field Jo is horrified to discover the identity of her real father, and the Castlefield Blues find a new goalkeeper. Shazza and Eddie dive headlong into their new careers, while relations remain tense between Geraldine and her mother. Starring Jo McInnes and John Thomson (T) (273106)
10.20 They Think It's All Over Again With guests Steve Collins and Tony Hawks (r) (T) (825090)
10.50 Question Time Assessment of the Stephen Lawrence report (T) (7497564)
11.55 While Justice Sleeps (1994) FILM A widow begins to suspect that an old family friend may have abused her eight-year-old daughter. Drama, with Cybill Shepherd and Tim Matheson. Directed by Alan Smithee (T) (542038)

BBC2

7.00am Children's BBC Breakfast Show: Open a Door (3813274) **7.05** Teletubbies (6731816) **7.30** Snorks (5976449) **7.50** Blue Peter (6596903) **8.20** Taz-Mania (7602564) **8.40** Polka Dot Shorts (3881212) **8.50** Fiddley Foodle Bird (3687496) **9.00** Job Bank (8986859) **9.10** Belief File (4418309) **9.30** Watch (1593854) **9.45** Come Outside (1598309) **10.00** Teletubbies (35458) **10.30** Storytime (2588903) **10.45** The Experimenter (7530293) **11.05** Space Ark (8020038) **11.15** Zig Zag (6612534) **11.35** Pathways of Belief (8297854) **11.50** Mad about Music (8274903) **12.10pm** English File (9244632) **12.30** Working Lunch (75903) **1.00** Fiddley Foodle Bird (94836941)
1.10 The Travel Hour (r) (9590903)
2.10 International Tennis: The Guardian Direct Cup Quarter-final coverage from Battersea Park (61646212)
2.40 News; Weather (T) (3908090)
2.45 Westminster (T) (2455632)
3.25 News; Weather (T) (7636470)
3.30 International Tennis: The Guardian Direct Cup Further coverage (496)
4.00 Kaye (6866125)
4.25 Ready, Steady, Cook (T) (6869212)
4.55 Esther (T) (3103293)
5.30 Today's the Day (T) (767)
6.00 Star Trek: Deep Space Nine The space station falls victim to a mysterious epidemic (r) (T) (417670)
6.45 Quantum Leap Part two (r) (T) (895729)
7.30 First Sight Report on the state of modern nursing (T) (816)
8.00 Fred Dibnah's Industrial Age The steeplejack traces the development of Britain's textile industry (T) (4877)
8.30 CHOICE **Wheeler Dealers** Two teams are challenged to make their fortunes in the motor industry — in just five days (T) (2922)
9.00 Red Dwarf Part two. Rimmer is invited to dinner by the Captain (T) (1038)
9.30 CHOICE **Horizon** A re-examination of a controversial theory about cot death (T) (271748)
10.20 Tales of Tools The needle (T) (344835)
10.30 Newsnight With Kirsty Wark (T) (280816)



John le Carré, whose new novel is reviewed tonight (11.15pm)

11.15 Late Review Includes a review of John le Carré's new novel, *Single and Single* (348564)
11.55 Skiing Forecast (520496)
12.00am Despatch Box (39959)
12.30 BBC Learning Zone: Open University: Imagining the Pacific **1.00** France in the Viewfinder **1.30** Two Research Styles **2.00** Further Education: Communication at Work **4.00** Languages: Italianissimo 17-20 **5.00** Teacher Training: Teaching Today Special **5.45** Open University: The Enlightenment — Reason and Progress **6.10** Strategy on the Screen **6.35** Forecasting the Economy

HTV

5.30am ITN Morning News (71309)
6.00 GMTV (1660926)
9.25 Trisha (T) (5016651)
10.30 This Morning (T) (11120458)
12.15pm HTV News (T) (7799187)
12.30 ITN Lunchtime News (T) (79729)
1.00 Shortland Street (69903)
1.30 Home and Away (T) (98800)
2.00 The Jerry Springer Show (T) (5434090)
2.45 Supermarket Sweep (T) (966748)
3.15 ITN News Headlines (T) (2450552)
3.20 HTV News (T) (5600075)
3.25 CITV: Mopatop's Shop (2355908) **3.35** The Adventures of Dawdle (3733309) **3.45** The Sylvester and Tweety Mysteries (3713545) **4.00** Lavender Castle (6211361) **4.15** Hey Arnold! (3981903) **4.40** Children's Ward (2871922)
5.10 A Country Practice New nurse Claire Bonacci makes her mark (9889019)
5.36 HTV Crimestoppers (160274)
5.40 ITN Early Evening News (T) (119309)
6.00 Home and Away Gypsy loses her cool (r) (T) (451038)
6.25 WALES: Wales Tonight (T) (398106)
6.25 WEST: HTV Weather (783274)
6.30 WEST: The West Tonight (T) (458)
7.00 Emmerdale Seth gets the order of the boot (T) (1293)
7.30 WEST: We Can Work It Out Britain's system for recalling dangerous products comes under scrutiny (670)
7.30 WALES: Wales This Week New series. Current affairs issues (670)
8.00 The Bill DCI Burnside investigates a gang of women swindling hapless businessmen (T) (6212)



Playing away: Kevin Purssord reveals his indiscretions (9pm)

9.00 Infidelity New series. Personal accounts of adultery, often featuring both — or all three — sides of the story, set to a soundtrack of classic romantic songs. Among the love-rats featured are Kevin, who juggled two unsuspecting girlfriends for eight years (1/3) (T) (3748)
10.00 News at Ten; Weather (T) (61212)
10.30 HTV News and Weather (T) (505767)
10.40 Thursday Night Live Hard-hitting debates (398274)
11.40 WEST: Anatomy of Disaster The disastrous worldwide effects of the freak weather front El Niño (441125)
11.40 WALES: We Can Work It Out (737564)
12.10 WALES: Tales from the Darkside Painkiller. A backache sufferer's miracle cure backfires (6581688)
12.40am Liverpool Victoria Charity Snooker Challenge The first day (2216442)
2.10 T in the Park A performance by Robbie Williams. Last in series (6/6) (1426171)
3.10 Box Office America Top 10 US movie releases (80807404)
3.35 Cybernet Computer news (40734607)
4.05 Potty About Pets (39025688)
4.30 Coach (7144737)
4.55 ITV Nightscreen (9232317)

CENTRAL

As HTV West except: **12.20pm-12.30 Central News;** Weather (T) (8198019) **1.00 Echo Point** (69903) **1.30 The Jerry Springer Show** (T) (1285380) **2.15-2.45 Home and Away** (T) (967477) **3.20-3.25 Central News** (T) (5600075) **5.10-5.40 Shortland Street** (9889019) **6.25-6.55 Central News;** Weather (T) (436729) **6.55-7.00 Lifeline** (T) (585854) **10.30-10.40 Central News;** Weather (T) (505767) **11.40-12.45 Storytellers: Rod Stewart** (257458) **2.15am Sean Connery Close Up** (9803238) **3.00 Pop Down the Pub** (r) (80816152) **3.25 Cybernet** (30826539) **3.55 The Making of Elizabeth** (r) (96641084) **4.20 Central Jobfinder '99** (T) (4335355) **5.20-5.30 Asian Eye** (7927220)

WESTCOUNTRY

As HTV West except: **12.15pm-12.27 Westcountry News;** Weather (T) (7799187) **12.27-12.30 Illuminations** (8106038) **1.00 Emmerdale** (r) (T) (69903) **1.30 The Jerry Springer Show** (T) (1285380) **2.15-2.45 Home and Away** (T) (967477) **3.20-3.25 Westcountry News;** Weather (T) (5600075) **5.08 Birthday People** (5974545) **5.10-5.40 Home and Away** (T) (9889019) **6.00-7.00 Westcountry Live** (T) (87748) **10.30-10.40 Westcountry News;** Weather (T) (505767) **11.40-12.40 The Wright Verdicts** (441125)

MERIDIAN

As HTV West except: **12.15pm-12.30 Meridian News;** Weather (7799187) **5.10-5.40 Home and Away** (T) (9889019) **6.00 Meridian Tonight** (T) (106) **6.30-7.00 Getaways** (458) **10.30-10.40 Meridian News;** Weather (T) (505767) **11.40-12.40 New York News** (441125) **5.00am-5.30 Freescreen** (20442)

ANGLIA

As HTV West except: **12.19pm Anglia Air Watch** (8100854) **12.20-12.30 Anglia News and Weather** (8198019) **5.10-5.40 Home and Away** (T) (9889019) **5.59 Anglia Weather** (T) (180038) **6.00 Anglia News** (T) (106) **6.30-7.00 About Anglia** (458) **10.29 Anglia Air Watch** (600903) **10.30-10.40 Anglia News and Weather** (T) (505767) **11.40 Crime Night** (629106) **11.55 First Take** (r) (901212) **12.10am-12.40 Tales from the Darkside** (r) (6581688)

S4C

Starts: **5.55am Sesame Street** (r) (80046057) **7.00 The Big Breakfast** (34780212) **9.00 Ysgolion:** History in Action (93847477) **9.20 Geographical Eye** (93850941) **9.40 History in Action** (63557816) **10.00 Middle English** (57899699) **10.20 Fourways Farm** (65303941) **10.30 Scientific Eye** (69594835) **10.50 What the Papers Said** (21598106) **11.00 The Number Crew** (29879125) **11.10 Pitch Fever** (53868816) **11.30 Powerhouse** (T) (40262293) **12.00pm Bewitched** (T) (29189106) **12.30 Sesame Street** (T) (38727293) **1.00 Planed Plant** (T) (34790699) **1.30 The Ocean World of John Stoneman** (T) (38726564) **2.00 Racing from Wincanton and Huntingdon** (53169390) **4.00 Fifteen-to-One** (T) (81634212) **4.30 Ricki Lake** (T) (81630496) **5.00 Planed Plant** (64111187) **5.30 Countdown** (T) (81621748) **6.00 Newyddion 6** (T) (54926670) **6.10 Heno** (T) (16809477) **7.00 Pobol y Cwm** (T) (64124651) **7.30 Newyddion** (T) (81631125) **8.00 Slaymaker** (T) (64140699) **8.30 Pam Fi Duw?** (T) (64129106) **9.00 i dot** (48214449) **10.00 Father Ted** (r) (T) (60821816) **10.35 Friends** (T) (56238854) **11.05 King of the Hill** (T) (67079038) **11.35 Rising Damp** (T) (63181309) **12.05am Dispatches** (T) (19149607) **12.35 Prey** (T) (55626201) **1.30 Fusion** (2/6) (T) (59786688) **2.05 Diwedd**

CHANNEL 4

5.55am Sesame Street (3297651)
7.00 The Big Breakfast (64458)
9.00 Schools: History in Action (T) (4407293) **9.20** Geographical Eye Over Asia (T) (4494729) **9.40** Histroy in Action (T) (9887106) **10.00** Middle English (T) (1869564) **10.20** Fourways Farm (T) (6032651) **10.30** Scientific Eye (T) (7542038) **10.50** What the Papers Said (3275106) **11.00** The Number Crew (T) (8016835) **11.10** Pitch Fever (7967421)
11.30 Powerhouse (T) (7699)
12.00pm Sesame Street (T) (68125)
12.30 Bewitched (r) (T) (90629)
1.00 Pet Rescue (r) (T) (67545)
1.30 The Ocean World of John Stoneman How changes in the marine environment could affect the future (r) (T) (92670)
2.00 Racing from Wincanton and Huntingdon Introduced by Brough Scott and Simon Holt (3361)
4.00 Fifteen-to-One (T) (699)
4.30 Countdown (T) (5541458)
4.55 Ricki Lake (T) (3198361)
5.30 Pet Rescue (T) (835)
6.00 Dishes Dating show with a culinary theme (T) (748)
6.30 Hollyoaks Finn supports Kate on her big day (T) (800)
7.00 Channel 4 News; Weather (T) (296390)
7.50 Transition: Lagos Stories Musician Orlando Julius explains why he's returning to Lagos after 25 years in the West (T) (695090)
8.00 Wild Tales A look at the behaviour of snakes across the world (4854)
9.00 CHOICE **Ramsay's Boiling Point** New series charting eight months in the life of volatile chef Gordon Ramsay (1/5) (T) (6106)
9.30 Dispatches Callum MacRae investigates homebuyers' views on the work of surveyors (T) (80835)



Classic comedy with Leonard Rossiter as Rigsby (10pm)

10.00 Rising Damp Rigsby gives Alan a scare (r) (T) (774545)
10.35 Whose Line Is It Anyway? (r) (T) (533309)
11.05 Ally McBeal A feisty attorney (Sandra Bernhard) makes her presence felt in a sexual harassment case (r) (T) (173187)
12.05am 4 Later Introduction; Prey (8108274)
1.00 Vids Offbeat video review (49065)
1.30 The Communique (6329959)
1.40 NYPD Blue Medavoy and Martinez investigate a bodega fronting illegal activities (r) (T) (6385317)
2.30 St Elsewhere Craig's vagabond brother *ensures that sibling rivalries dog his* wedding anniversary (r) (3277794)
3.20 Bond Street (1948) FILM Roland Young stars in this compelling drama consisting of four stories connected to a wedding. Directed by Gordon Parry (803065)
5.10 Cane Toads How an Australian pest-control plan backfired (r) (2819607)

CHANNEL 5

6.00am 5 News and Sport Headline round-up (6147458)
7.00 WideWorld Part five. Comparisons between the education systems in Britain and France (r) (T) (6512699)
7.30 Milkshake! (2041203)
7.35 Wimzie's House (r); 5 News Update (3767125)
8.00 Havakazoo (r) (4540699)
8.30 Dappledown Farm (r); 5 News Update (4532670)
9.00 Animal House (r) (T) (1232106)
9.25 Russell Grant's Postcards (r) (7967477)
9.30 The Oprah Winfrey Show (6603361)
10.20 Sunset Beach Amy and Brad come clean to Emily (T) (1610854)
11.10 Leeza (4029477)
12.00pm 5 News at Noon (T) (4510458)
12.30 Family Affairs Pete is furious with Claire (r) (T); 5 News Update (9555632)
1.00 The Bold and the Beautiful Grant admits that he is seeing another woman (T) (6504670)
1.30 The Roseanne Show Interview with Bill Cosby (r), 5 News Update (9554903)
2.00 100 Per Cent Gold (5700632)
2.30 Good Afternoon (1353212)
3.30 Uncommon Valour (TVM 1983) FILM A beleaguered fire chief fights a deadly hospital blaze, fending off unwanted distractions from a frustrated colleague and a deranged arsonist in the process. Drama, with Mitchell Ryan. Directed by Rod Amateau; 5 News Update (9347274)
5.20 Sunset Beach Shown earlier (r) (T); 5 News Update (5891075)
6.00 100 Per Cent Quiz (6967477)
6.30 Family Affairs Cat gives Pete a taste of his own medicine (T) (6958729)
7.00 5 News; Weather (T) (5711748)
7.30 Champions of Nature Documentary focusing on Diane Claridge and her work with dolphins (T); 5 News Update (6970941)
8.00 The Pepsi Chart The Corrs perform *Runaway*. Plus, Britney Spears's video *Baby One More Time* (5720496)
8.30 Stranger Than Fiction A look at the bizarre and baffling phenomenon of cattle mutilation. Who is responsible — and could there be any extraterrestrial involvement?; 5 News Update (5709903)
9.00 Danger Island (1996) FILM A group of air-crash survivors are washed up on an island — but the discovery that it's infected by a deadly virus makes them realise their problems are only just beginning. Adventure, starring June Lockhart, Joe Lara and Richard Beymer. Directed by Tommy Lee Wallace (T); 5 News Update (44038748)
10.40 Bring Me the Head of Light Entertainment Comedy quiz (8886019)
11.15 Red Shoe Diaries New series. Erotic stories of obsession (5572598)
11.50 The Jack Docherty Show Chat and music (7420496)
12.30am Live and Dangerous With Mark Webster (32645210)
4.40 Prisoner: Cell Block H Heather tries to follow Dennis's example, and Judy gets a special prize in Bev's lottery (9497521)
5.30 100 Per Cent (r) (9439688)

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PAY TV: SATELLITE, CABLE AND DIGITAL

● **For further listings see Saturday's *Vision***

SKY ONE

7.00am Count Duckula (24854) **7.30** Chris Evans (27583) **8.30** Hollywood Squares (13689) **9.00** Sally Jessy Raphael (90458) **10.00** Oprah Winfrey (41895) **11.00** Guilty! (29309) **12.00pm** Jenny Jones (21106) **1.00** Mad About You (23125) **1.30** Jeopardy (34870) **2.00** Sally Jessy Raphael (87835) **3.00** Jenny Jones (43854) **4.00** Guilty! (22361) **5.00** Star Trek: Voyager (1458) **6.00** America's Dumbest Criminals (8090) **6.30** Dream Team (2670) **7.00** The Simpsons (2187) **7.30** The Simpsons (8854) **8.00** America's Dumbest Criminals (1835) **8.30** World's Weirdest TV (3670) **9.00** Friends (28545) **9.30** ER (95564) **10.30** Veronica's Closet (94564) **11.00** Dream Team (230 90) **11.30** Star Trek: Voyager (95125) **12.30am** The Commish (81046) **1.30** Long Play (7184930)

SKY BOX OFFICE

Sky's pay-per-view movie channels. To view any film telephone 0990 800888
SKY BOX OFFICE 1 (Transponder 51)
The Postman (1997)
SKY BOX OFFICE 2 (Transponder 60)
Good Will Hunting (1997)
SKY BOX OFFICE 3 (Transponder 59)
Good Burger (1997)
As Good as It Gets (1997)
SKY BOX OFFICE 4 (Transponder 58)
The Edge (1997)

FILMFOUR

6.00pm Crimewave (1986) (1838458) **7.30 La Jetee (1962)** (1091800) **8.00 Twelve Monkeys (1995)** (51722854) **10.10 The Vanishing (1988)** (6339477) **12.00am The Shining (1980)** (2138978) **2.00 Benny's Video (1992)** (4645355) **3.50 Miller's Crossing (1990)** (99865143)

SKY PREMIER

6.10am Cocoon: The Return (1988) (64189038) **8.00 The Bomber Boys (1995)** (76729) **10.00 To Gillian on her 37th Birthday (1996)** (11729) **12.00pm** The Directors: Ron Howard (14816) **1.00** Femmes Fatales: Susan Sarandon (23564) **2.00 Cocoon: The Return (1988)** (730800) **3.50 The Bomber Boys (1995)** (507309) **5.30 To Gillian on her 37th Birthday (1996)** (31980) **7.30** Tracey Takes On: Sport (1564) **8.00** Hollywood Buzz (4545) **8.30 Night Falls on Manhattan (1997)** (37309) **10.30 The Rock (1996)** (61788670) **12.45am Mother (1996)** (291084) **2.25 Acts of Love (1995)** (317423) **4.15** The Directors (262220)

SKY MOVIEMAX

5.25am Ivanhoe (1982) (79747854) **7.55 Guinevere (1993)** (9732354) **9.25 Godzilla vs Gigan (1972)** (91937496) **11.00 Race the Sun (1996)** (74583) **1.00pm James and the Giant Peach (1996)** (92787) **3.00 Guinevere (1993)** (99941) **5.00 Race the Sun (1996)** (90748) **7.00 James and the Giant Peach (1996)** (91318) **9.00 Perfect Crime (1997)** (78038) **11.00 Spawn (1997)** (526019) **12.40am Murder in My Mind (TVM 1997)** (800681) **2.15 Marie: The True Story (1985)** (712648) **4.10 Bloodhounds II (1997)** (7819581)

SKY CINEMA

4.00pm Terror By Night (1946) (4935832) **5.30** Hall of Fame: John Wayne (3992767) **6.00 The Duchess and the Dirtwater Fox (1976)** (1659361) **8.00 How to Marry a Millionaire (1953)** (1661106) **10.00 Under the Volcano (1984)** (6728361) **11.55 Quartet (1981)** (7868941) **1.40am Days of Glory (1944)** (36083288) **3.10 Tight Spot (1955)** (6807220) **4.50** Hall of Fame: Robert Mitchum (14300387)

TNT

9.00pm Butterfield Eight (1960) (92794835) **11.00 The Postman Always Rings Twice (1946)** (38193859) **1.15am The Girl and the General (1967)** (73815404) **3.00 Butterfield Eight (1960)** (13836030) **5.00** Close

SKY SPORTS 1

7.00am Sports Centre **7.15** Wrestling **8.15** You're On Sky Sports! **9.00** Racing News **9.30** Aerobics **10.00** Unbelievable Sports **10.30** FA Cup Special **12.00pm** Aerobics **12.30** Ringside **2.00** Spanish Football **3.00** Unbelievable Sports **3.30** V-Max **4.00** World Pool League **5.00** Wrestling **6.00** Sports Centre **6.30** Football League Review **7.00** What a Weekend **7.30** Futbol Mundial **8.00** Spanish Football **10.00** Sports Centre **10.15** You're On Sky Sports! **11.00** Trans World Sport **12.00am** Sports Centre **12.15** You're On Sky Sports! **1.00** Football League Review **1.30** What a Weekend **2.00** Futbol Mundial **2.30** Spanish Football **4.30** Sports Centre **4.45** Close

SKY SPORTS 2

7.00am Aerobics **7.30** Sports Centre **7.45** Racing News **8.15** Unbelievable Sports **8.45** Sports Centre **9.00** Fish TV **10.00** World Pool League **11.00** Golf **3.00pm** Total Sport **3.30** FA Cup Special **5.00** Inside the Senior PGA Tour **5.30** Football League Review **6.00** What A Weekend **6.30** Inside the Senior PGA Tour **7.00** Live Golf **11.00** The Rugby Club **12.00am** Tight Lines **1.00** Ice Hockey **3.30** Sports Centre **3.45** Close

SKY SPORTS 3

12.00pm Wrestling **1.00** Fish TV **2.00** The Entertainers **2.30** Watersports World **3.30** Sports Unlimited **4.00** Unbelievable Sports **5.00** Survival of the Fittest **5.30** The Rugby Club **6.30** Fishing: Tight Lines **7.30** Live Ice Hockey **10.00** Bobby Charlton's Football Scrapbook **11.30** Close

EUROSPORT

7.30am Five-a-Side Football **8.30** Nordic Skiing **9.30** Live Women's Nordic Skiing **10.30** Women's Alpine Skiing **11.30** Nordic Skiing **1.00pm** Women's Nordic Skiing **2.00** Live Women's Biathlon **3.15** Live Tennis **4.30** Women's Nordic Skiing **5.00** Racing Line **5.30** Live Five-a-Side Football **7.00** Live Tennis **8.30** Live Five-a-Side Football **10.00** Athletics **11.00** Boxing **12.00am** Racing Line **12.30** Close

UK GOLD

7.00am Crossroads **7.30** Neighbours **7.55** EastEnders **8.30** The Bill **9.30** When the Boat Comes In **10.30** Rhoda **11.00** Dallas **11.55** Neighbours **12.25pm** EastEnders **1.00** Juliet Bravo **2.00** Dallas **2.55** The Bill **3.55** EastEnders **4.30** Rhoda **5.00** All Creatures Great and Small **6.00** Dynasty **7.00** 2point4 Children **7.40** Dad's Army **8.20** The Brittas Empire **9.00** The Young Ones **9.45** Bottom **10.25** Common as Muck **11.50** The Bill **12.50am** Blackadder II **1.30** French and Saunders **2.00** Dangerfield **2.45** Shopping with Screenshop

GRANADA PLUS

6.00am Within These Walls **7.00** Bowler **7.30** Doctor at Large **8.00** Beadle's About **8.30** The Many Wives of Patrick **9.00** Classic Coronation Street **9.30** Emmerdale Farm **10.00** Upstairs Downstairs **11.00** The Gentle Touch **12.00pm** Classic Coronation Street **12.30** Emmerdale Farm **1.00** The Many Wives of Patrick **1.30** Pig in the Middle **2.00** Upstairs Downstairs **3.00** The Love Boat **4.00** The Saint **5.00** Hart To Hart **6.00** Emmerdale Farm **6.30** Classic Coronation Street **7.00** Mission Impossible **8.00** The Love Boat **9.00** Classic Coronation Street **9.30** The Comedians **10.00** Jokers Wild **10.30** Sez Les **11.00** Men and Motors

Kevin Costner and Olivia Williams star in the epic post-apocalyptic drama *The Postman* (Sky Box Office 1)

CARLTON SELECT

5.00pm What's Cooking? **5.30** Gridlock **6.00** London Bridge **6.30** Get Back **7.00** Boon **8.00** Animal SOS **8.30** An Inspector Calls **9.00** St Elsewhere **10.00** Tales from the Hollywood Hills **11.00** Hill Street Blues **12.00am** Us and Them **12.30** Gridlock

DISNEY CHANNEL

6.00am Bear in the Big Blue House **6.25** Classic Toons **6.35** Gummi Bears **7.00** Classic Toons **7.10** Aladdin **7.35** 101 Dalmatians **8.00** Goof Troop **8.25** Classic Toons **8.45** New Adventures of Winnie the Pooh **9.00** The Adventures of Spot **9.05** Animal Shelf **9.15** Pocket Dragons **9.30** Bear in the Big Blue House **9.55** The Toothbrush Family **10.00** Bite Size **10.10** Tots TV **10.30** Big Garage **10.45** PB and J Otter **11.00** Sesame Street **12.00pm** The Adventures of Spot **12.05** Animal Shelf **12.15** Pocket Dragons **12.30** Bear in the Big Blue House **12.55** The Toothbrush Family **1.00** Bite Size **1.10** Tots TV **1.30** Big Garage **1.45** PB and J Otter **2.00** New Adventures of Winnie the Pooh **2.30** Quack Pack **3.00** The Little Mermaid **3.30** Ani Attack **4.00** 101 Dalmatians **4.30** Hercules: The TV Show **5.00** Recess **5.15** Pepper Ann **5.30** Smart Guy **6.00** Teen Angel **6.30** Boy Meets World **7.00** FILM: **101 Dalmatians (1996)** **8.40** Dinosaurs **9.00** Honey I Shrunk the Kids **9.45** Home Improvement **10.15** Mega Movie Magic **10.30** The Wonder Years **11.00** Dr Quinn **12.00am** Close

FOX KIDS NETWORK

6.00am Adventures of Dodo **6.05** Power Rangers Turbo **6.55** Spiderman **7.20** Oggy and the Cockroaches **7.30** Donkey Kong Country **8.00** Hero Turtles: The Next Mutation **8.25** The Incredible Hulk **8.50** Iron Man **9.15** Fantastic Four **9.40** X-Men **10.05** Casper **10.30** Oggy and the Cockroaches **10.55** Eek!Stravaganza **11.05** Bobby's World **11.30** Life with Louie **11.55** Home to Rent **12.05pm** Dennis and Gnasher **12.30** Donkey Kong Country **1.00** Mowgli: The New Adventures of Jungle Book **1.25** Ace Ventura **1.55** The Incredible Hulk **2.20** Iron Man **2.45** Fantastic Four **3.10** X-Men **3.30** Fox Kids X-Press **3.35** Spiderman **4.00** Goosebumps **4.25** Hero Turtles: The Next Mutation **4.50** Casper **5.00** Dennis and Gnasher **5.30** Ace Ventura **6.00** Donkey Kong Country **6.30** Eek!Stravaganza **6.55** Oggy and the Cockroaches **7.00** Close

NICKELODEON

6.00am Rocko's Modern Life **6.30** Bruno the Kid **7.00** CatDog **7.30** Rugrats **8.00** The Wild Thornberrys **8.30** Arthur **9.00** CBBC **10.00** Wimzie's House **10.30** Babar **11.00** The Magic School Bus **11.30** PB Bear etc **12.00pm** Rugrats **12.30** Blue's Clues **1.00** Bananas in Pyjamas **1.30** Little Bear Stories **2.00** Clangers etc **2.30** CBBC **3.30** Arthur **4.00** Three Friends and Jerry **4.30** Rugrats **5.00** Sister Sister **5.30** Sabrina **6.00** Renford Rejects **6.30** Moesha **7.00** Close

BRAVO

8.00pm The A-Team **9.00** LAPD **9.30** Cops **10.00** The Late Lounge **10.30** Erotic Confessions **11.00** FILM: **Deep Cover (1992)** **1.00am** Sex Bytes **1.35** Erotic Series **2.05** The Late Lounge **2.35** Cops **3.05** FILM: **The Panic in Needle Park (1971)** **5.00** LAPD **5.30** Bushido **6.00** Close

PARAMOUNT COMEDY

7.00pm Jenny **7.30** Grace Under Fire **8.00** Ellen **8.30** NewsRadio **9.00** Drop the Dead Donkey **9.30** Whose Line Is It Anyway? **10.00** Frasier **10.30** Cheers **11.00** Seinfeld **11.30** The Larry Sanders Show **12.00am** Late Night with David Letterman **1.00** Taxi **1.30** The Critic **2.00** Dr Katz **2.30** Tibs and Fibs **3.00** Nightstand **3.30** Abbot and Costello **4.00** Close

THE SCI-FI CHANNEL

SATELLITE: 6pm-MIDNIGHT ONLY

7.30am Bloomberg Information Television **8.00** Sightings **9.00** Buck Rogers in the 25th Century **10.00** Quantum Leap **11.00** Dark Shadows **11.30** The Ray Bradbury Theatre **12.00pm** The Twilight Zone **12.30** The Twilight Zone **1.00** Tales of the Unexpected **1.30** Tales of the Unexpected **2.00** Amazing Stories **2.30** Mysteries, Magic and Miracles **3.00** Buck Rogers in the 25th Century **4.00** The Incredible Hulk **5.00** Sightings **6.00** Time Trax **7.00** Quantum Leap **8.00** Roswell Cover-Ups and Close Encounters **9.00** Babylon 5 **10.00** FILM: **Monolith (1993)** **12.00am** New Alfred Hitchcock **12.30** The Ray Bradbury Theatre **1.00** FILM: **Dracula's Widow (1989)** **2.35** Sci-Focus Special **3.00** The Twilight Zone **3.30** Dark Shadows **4.00** Close

HOME & LEISURE

6.00am Today's Gourmet **6.30** Graham Kerr **7.00** Room Service **7.30** The Painted House **8.00** Wedding Story **8.30** A Baby Story **9.00** Simply Painting **9.25** The Home and Leisure Hour **9.30** Potted History with Antony Henn **10.00** Real Gardens **10.30** Cookabout with Greg and Max **11.00** The Diceman **11.30** Fishing Australia **12.00pm** Our House Down Under **12.30** Antiques Trail **1.00** Our House **1.30** Hometime **2.00** New Yankee Workshop **2.30** Home Again with Bob Vila **3.00** This Old House with Steve and Norm **3.30** Go Fishing

DISCOVERY

4.00pm Rex Hunt Fishing Adventures **4.30** Walker's World **5.00** Wheel Nuts **5.30** Treasure Hunters **6.00** Wildlife SOS **6.30** Superhunt **7.30** The Elegant Solution **8.00** Discover Magazine **9.00** Science Frontiers **10.00** Super Structures **11.00** Forensic Detectives **12.00am** Super Structures **1.00** Treasure Hunters **1.30** Wheel Nuts **2.00** Close

ANIMAL PLANET

12.00pm Horse Tales **12.30** Going Wild **1.00** Nature Watch with Julian Pettifer **1.30** Crocodile Hunter **2.00** Wildlife ER **2.30** Human/Nature **3.30** Harry's Practice **4.00** Jack Hanna's Zoo Life **4.30** Animal Doctor **5.00** Pet Rescue **5.30** Crocodile Hunter **6.00** The New Adventures of Black Beauty **6.30** Lassie **7.00** Rediscovery of the World **8.00** Animal Doctor **8.30** The Blue Beyond **9.30** Emergency Vets **10.00** Deadly Australians **10.30** The Big Animal Show **11.00** Wild Rescues **11.30** Emergency Vets **12.00am** Close

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

7.00pm Rise of the Falcon **7.30** The Eagle and the Snake **8.00** Man Eaters. Komodo Dragons **9.00** Extreme Earth. Avalanche! **9.30** Extreme Earth. Flight from the Volcano **10.00** On the Edge. Tsunami — Killer Wave **11.00** Ocean Worlds. Survival on the Ice **12.00am** Ocean Worlds. Ocean Drifters

HISTORY

4.00pm The Civil War. This Mighty Scourge of War **5.00** Weapons at War: Aircraft Carriers **6.00** Ancient Prophecy **7.00** Warhorse: In the Face of Fire

CARLTON FOOD

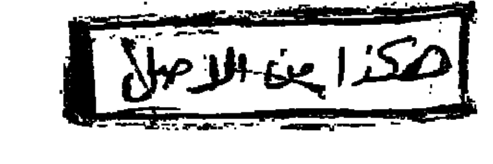
9.00am Food Network Daily **9.30** Coxon's Kitchen College **10.00** Chef for a Day **10.30** Alive and Cooking **11.00** What's Cooking? **11.30** A Slice of the Action **12.00pm** Food Network Daily **12.30** Food Factory **1.00** Coxon's Kitchen College **1.30** The Green Gourmet **2.00** Tessa Bramley's Country Kitchen **2.30** Food Network Daily **3.00** Scotland's Larder **3.30** A Slice of the Action **4.00** From the Ground Up **4.30** Mridula's Indian Kitchen **5.00** Close

LIVING

6.00am Tiny and Crew **6.20** Johnson and Friends **6.30** Greedysaurus and the Gang **6.40** Tiny Tales **6.45** Philbert the Frog **6.50** Polka Dot Shorts **7.00** Practical Parenting **7.05** Professor Bubble **7.30** Caillou **7.35** Bug Alert **7.55** Practical Parenting **8.00** Barney and Friends **8.25** Babaloo **8.30** Caillou **8.35** Tiny and Crew **8.50** Practical Parenting **9.00** Can't Cook, Won't Cook **9.30** The Roseanne Show **10.00** The Jerry Springer Show **10.50** Maury Povich **11.40** Brookside **12.10pm** Animal Rescue **12.40** Rescue 911 **1.10** Special Babies **1.40** Beyond Belief, Fact or Fiction **2.10** LA Law **3.10** Living Room **4.00** Michael Cole **4.50** Ro londa **5.40** Ready, Steady, Cook **6.15** The Jerry Springer Show **7.05** Rescue 911 **7.35** Animal Rescue **8.10** Maury Povich **9.00** FILM: **Nightmare (1991)** **11.00** Sex Life Down Under **12.00am** Close

ZEE TV

6.00am Chor Raasta **5.30** Music Time **6.00** Hero Kal Aaj Au **6.30** Awaaz Nayee Andaz Wohi **7.00** Sai Baba **7.30** News **8.00** Karoben Duniya **8.30** Sailaab **9.00** Zanjeeren **9.30** Health Show **10.00** Hawaan **11.00** Pot Luck **11.30** Parampara **12.00pm** FILM **3.00** Zee Bangla **3.30** Public Demand **4.00** Akbar Birbal **4.30** Fardeal Anlakshan **5.30** Daraar **6.00** Pop Time **6.30** Hip Hip Hurray **7.00** Gudgudee **7.30** Cinemagic **8.00** News **8.30** Chahat Aur Nafrat **9.00** Hasratein **9.30** Blunt 2 **10.30** Anhonee **11.00** Majhe Chaand Chahiye **11.30** About You **12.00am** News **12.30** Zee Business Show **1.00** Zee Bangla **1.30** Raahat **2.00** FILM Se **4.30** An Hour With



RUGBY UNION 50
Prop looks forward to getting back in the England fold

SPORT

BRYANT'S EYE 54
The campaign to take sport beyond the fringe



THURSDAY FEBRUARY 25 1999

Plan for biennial tournament shelved

Blatter backs down over World Cup

FROM ROB HUGHES IN GENEVA

THE idea of a football World Cup every two years, hailed by some as doubling the chances of England staging the event, was shelved here yesterday. If it happens at all, it will not be for at least ten years.

This became evident after Sepp Blatter, the president of Fifa, the game's governing body, was summoned to explain to Uefa, the European football union, why he had floated his concept of the biennial World Cup to a Swiss tabloid newspaper without consulting or informing the executives of either body. Blatter was contrite. "I came here to reinstate a dialogue with Uefa," he said after addressing the Uefa executive committee.

"I realised that I must give in on this occasion, but I have not forsaken the concept. First, we must all work together, all continental federations in the world, to co-ordinate the calendars. Until we all play to the same season, I recognise that it is a little premature to bring the World Cup up to date, even though I am convinced the four-year rotation ... is outdated." This could not now happen before 2010.

In truth, while it appears a victory for democracy and while the new president of Fifa has accepted that — unlike João Havelange, his predecessor — he cannot dictate policy, what happened yesterday was the power politics of the sport.

Blatter, who had to put back a flight to New Zealand to sit before the Uefa executive, met Lennart Johansson, the Swede whom he had beaten by 111 votes to 80 for the presidency of Fifa last June, at breakfast. It was a poignant meeting. Johansson, the Uefa president, had reacted with uncharacteristic fury to Blatter's unilateral proposal. "I could not accept that I am the head of Uefa, I am a vice-president of Fifa and chairman of the World Cup organising committee, yet all that I knew of Mr Blatter's proposals was what I read in the press," he said. "This is not the democracy we promised last June."

Blatter had heard on Monday from Pelé, Sir Bobby Charlton, Franz Beckenbauer and, to a lesser extent, from Michel Platini — all members of a players' commission that he has formed within Fifa — that there was, at best, lukewarm enthusiasm for doubling the wear and tear on players to accommodate twice as many World Cups. Sir Bobby, especially, believes that the rhythm of a four-year tournament is perfect because it stimulates players and spectators alike, it never goes stale and it is profitable.

After taxes, the 1998 World Cup in France is expected to yield a profit of £21.5 million. Small wonder that the British Government, as well as the Football Association, want it.

Nor have the television moguls been slow to back Blatter. Rupert Murdoch, chairman and chief executive of The News Corporation, parent company of *The Times*, has been clear in his enthusiasm. There were those here yesterday who felt that he would be, that any man on the business side of football would cherish the opportunity.

Moreover, Johansson admits that, had Blatter's proposal been put to the 203 nations affiliated to Fifa, it would have carried the vote. The irony is that nations of the Third World, obviously interested in doubling their income, have been put beyond the bounds of hosting the event since, to attract their vote for the presidency in the first place, World Cups were expanded to 32 nations. The $1 billion that can now be procured from television and sponsorships is the price that African and Caribbean nations pay for watching World Cups from afar.

Blatter made the best of his defeat. "The idea has provoked the discussion we badly needed on the coordination of the world calendar," he said. "For the time being I am a little bit out of my constitution in coming here to Uefa, but I am comfortable if this intensifies the relationship between Fifa and Uefa, because from here we can go forward, speaking one to the other." Johansson said: "I think it is a sign of a great president that he admits he made a mistake. I personally am against having the World Cup more frequently, but we have ten years now to discuss this, and it is my duty, as well as that of the president of Fifa, to listen to what our members want and to react to that."

In between Blatter consulting the players on Monday and the executives yesterday, the German Government voted to accept Fifa's insistence that, should Germany win the nomination to stage the 2006 World Cup, players' fees and prize-money would not be taxed. This pledge matches that of the British Government and gives Germany a more level playing field in the quest to stage what will remain, for now, a four-yearly opportunity to play sport and make big money.

Blatter, right, and Johansson present a united front yesterday

THE TIMES TWO CROSSWORD

No 1650

ACROSS
1 Giving good view (6)
5 Sprain: (hay)stack (4)
8 Pull: attract (4)
9 Fruitless: rudimentary (8)
10 Cream/wine/lemon dessert (8)
11 Wiles (4)
12 Seller (6)
14 Vigour (6)
16 Halt (4)
18 Hated (8)
20 (Text) supplement (8)
21 A spice: a staff (4)
22 Funeral fire (4)
23 Confederate opponent (Civil War) (6)

DOWN
2 Thomas —, Victorian essayist/historian (7)
3 Staircase post (5)
4 Hotel bedmakers (12)
5 Wearisome competitive struggle (3,4)
6 To envy (5)
7 Twofold setback *(slang)* (6,6)
13 Reduce in strength, number (7)
15 Where Campbells massacred Macdonalds (7)
17 Radio programme; present age (5)
19 St Paul such a citizen (5)

SOLUTION TO NO 1649
ACROSS: 1 Regicide 7 Photo 8 Posterity 9 Sag 10 Duel 11 Recant 13 Ealing 14 Mirror 17 Ornate 18 Burr 20 Gyp 22 Whitehall 23 Align 24 Remember
DOWN: 1 Rapid 2 Gaskell 3 Chef 4 Drivel 5 Coast 6 Rougher 7 Pyramid 12 Unknown 13 Elegiac 15 Rhubarb 16 Strike 17 Ophir 19 Ruler 21 Bede

Paul Azinger, of the United States, plays his tee-shot to the par-three 3rd hole during his first-round match against Ernie Els, of South Africa, yesterday

Value of early start soon dawns on Price

FROM JOHN HOPKINS
GOLF CORRESPONDENT
IN CARLSBAD, CALIFORNIA

NICK PRICE was the first man to start in the Andersen Consulting Match Play Championship here yesterday, and when he defeated Frankie Minoza on the 15th green he was the first to finish as well.

"Five good matches, that is what it will take to win this event," Price had said on the eve of this $5 million tournament, the first of three in the World Golf Championship. "One down and four to go" is what he might have thought to himself after he had beaten Minoza, of the Philippines, 4 and 3 and earned himself a minimum of $50,000 for his three hours' work.

Price and Minoza had begun at 7.20am, when the morning air was cold and the sun had not yet risen high enough to burn off the early-morning mist that hung over La Costa. Price always carried too much firepower for Minoza and this was brought home when he chipped in for an eagle three on the long 2nd hole. He was one up at the turn and then put paid to Minoza's chances by winning the next three holes as well.

"I can't remember finishing at 10.30 before," Price said with a grin. "I'm going to have to find a lot of things to do to fill the rest of the day." Price will now play Jeff Maggert, who defeated Fred Funk by two holes.

With a field that contains 64 of the leading 65 golfers in the world, it might have been thought that the crowds would have flocked to see the stars competing in ideal conditions on a course set up for matchplay — that is to say, with wide fairways and greens that are fast but not frighteningly so. In fact, the opposite was the case.

It was a surprise to be able to roam a course that seemed deserted in comparison with the crowds at a strokeplay event. Greg Norman and John Cook drew perhaps 50 spectators, and when Colin Montgomerie and Craig Stadler teed off, even the fact that Stadler is a local boy did not persuade more than perhaps 100 spectators to support him. It was like watching the Amateur Championship, except that these were the best professionals in the world.

Miguel Angel Jiménez must have felt much as Minoza did. Spain to California is a long way to travel to be comprehensively beaten 4 and 3. Justin Leonard was as sharp, if not sharper, than Price had been earlier. The 1997 Open champion was perhaps stung into action by the way that Jiménez started, birdieing two of the first three holes.

Leonard levelled by the 5th and then pulled away from Jiménez, the Europe vice-captain in the 1997 Ryder Cup, though Jiménez managed one final flurry when he hit a three-wood to three feet on the 9th for a birdie.

"Justin was six under par when he beat me, so it was no disgrace to lose to him," Jiménez said. "I know it is a long way to come, but that is how it is in matchplay. I played well but not brilliantly. I made a critical mistake in allowing Leonard to win three holes in a row starting at the 11th."

The day's biggest crowd was following Tiger Woods, the top seed, in his match against Nick Faldo, the lowest-ranked man in the field. "Knowing Nick's mentality, how strong his head is, he always has found ways to win golf tournaments," Greg Norman had said of the man who beat him in the 1996 Masters. "I would not be surprised if he found a way to win this match. I expect this match to be very intriguing, to say the least."

Woods, though aware that form favoured him, was just as circumspect as he looked forward to the match against the Briton. "Nick Faldo is a true champion," Woods said. "Even if he is not up to his normal form he is still a dangerous opponent."

Patrick Sjoland, one of the contenders for a place in the Europe Ryder Cup team, defeated Jim Furyk, who played for the United States at Valderrama in 1997, 5 and 3. Sjoland is baby-faced and quietly spoken, a manner that conceals a rare determination and the sort of golf style that opponents find infuriating. Furyk certainly did. He looked as though he did not know what had hit him after his defeat.

"I drove the ball well today," Sjoland said. "I made sure I hit into the middle of the fairway so that I had a good position from which to hit into the green."

RESULTS FROM CARLSBAD

FIRST ROUND (United States unless stated): N Price (Zim) bt F Minoza (Phil) 4 and 3; J Leonard bt M A Jiménez (Sp) 4 and 3; S Stricker lost to S Maruyama (Japan) 3 and 2; P Mickelson bt N Ozaki (Japan) 3 and 2; J Maggert bt F Funk 2 holes; J Furyk lost to P Sjoland (Swe) 5 and 3; L Janzen bt G Day 3 and 2; V Singh (Fiji) bt R Mediate 5 and 3; M Calcavecchia lost to C Franco (Par) 2 and 1; B Langer (Ger) bt B Faxon 4 and 2. Latest positions: E Els (SA) level with P Azinger (7); H Sutton 2 down to L Roberts (6); L Westwood (GB) 1 down to E Romero (Arg) (12); G Norman (Aus) 2 up on J Cook (4); C Montgomerie (GB) 5 down to C Stadler (10); J Huston level with R Estes (3); J Parnevik (Swe) 1 down to C Parry (Aus) (3); P Stewart 1 down to S Cink (2); D Clarke (GB) 1 down to A Magee (11); B Watts level with T Bjorn (Den) (1)

Old Firm plan joint venture

Phil Gordon says two of football's fiercest rivals seem close to agreeing to share the same sponsor

THE Old Firm may have divided Glasgow's football supporters for more than a century but, when it comes to new money, Celtic and Rangers appear to be united in pursuit of a joint-sponsor. Neither club would confirm yesterday that a £12 million shirt-sponsorship deal with NTL, an American media company, is in the offing, but the one thing that is not in doubt is that Celtic Park and Ibrox have established the need for common corporate branding.

NTL, who have purchased a 6 per cent stake in Newcastle United, said yesterday that the reports of an Old Firm tie-up were "speculation", while a Celtic spokesman said simply: "We are in discussions with a number of organisations about sponsorship."

However, there are indications that the clubs have spoken to a number of companies about joint-sponsorship as they seek to maximise their potential to become among the biggest clubs in Europe.

The need for Glasgow's arch-rivals to seek out the same fairy godfather is not so much encumenicism as economics. Both realise that a joint-sponsor would help them command a bigger market place than at present. The supporters apply a kind of consumer apartheid. Few Celtic supporters will opt for a pint of lager from McEwans, Rangers' sponsors for the past decade, while Celtic's deal with Umbro ensures Rangers fans rarely part with money for that particular brand of sportswear.

Should the NTL deal come to fruition, and the feeling within Glasgow is that a three-year package, which would net Celtic and Rangers £6 million apiece, is the best offer on the table, then it would not be the first time that the Old Firm have joined forces in the name of finance.

More than a decade ago, both clubs enjoyed a four-year relationship with C. R. Smith, a double-glazing firm whose name was on both sets of shirts. That venture ended in 1988, when Rangers signed with Scottish Brewers, although Celtic remained with C. R. Smith for several more years. But the rewards from that joint-association were small beer in comparison to what the two clubs now envisage.

Both have grown into extremely large businesses in the last decade and have turnovers in excess of £30 million. They need the kind of corporate backing that can help sustain their expanding wage bills. In return, a sponsor would get two clubs whose appeal spreads far beyond Glasgow. Like Manchester United, each has large followings in Australia and North America, as well as Europe. Celtic have the largest home average league attendance in Great Britain — 59,113 — and recent games have been broadcast live to Scandinavia.

The Old Firm are dissatisfied with their present income from television and keen to explore the pay-per-view possibilities offered by the new digital era. An association with a media company, such as NTL, could facilitate that.

Stephen Morrow, of Heriot Watt University's school of management, an expert on football's finances, said: "The amounts [for sponsorship] are growing all the time. There are very big clubs, which have a global reach, such as Celtic, Rangers or Manchester United. The sponsors realise this extends beyond the domestic markets and the figures will reflect that."

So, while British public opinion may be split about European financial union, Glasgow's divided football community looks set to embrace it.